APRIL 1966

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-ONE, NUMBER FOUR

THE TRIPLE WORLD CRISIS

Chinese Visions & American Policies: Benjamin Schwartz

Pax Russo-Americana? George Lichtheim

The Future of Capitalism: Robert L. Heilbroner

THE JEW AS MODERN WRITER: Alfred Kazin

MUTUAL AID AND THE NEGRO: John Slawson

GOING TO SHUL: Milton Himmelfarb

THE U.S. ECONOMY — 1966: Oscar Gass

DOUBLE FEATURE: Warren Coffey

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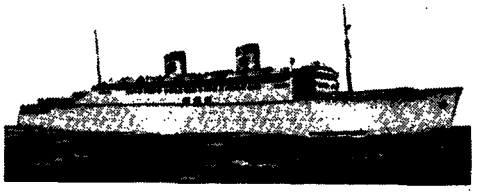

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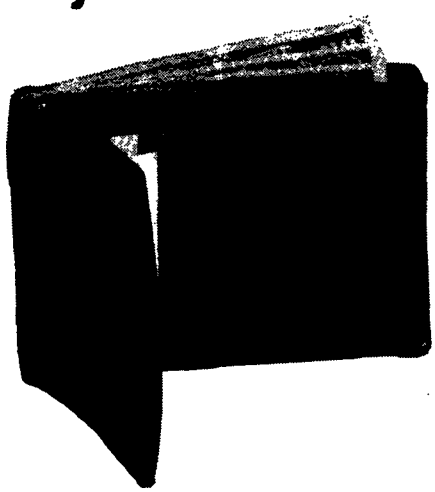

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Commentary

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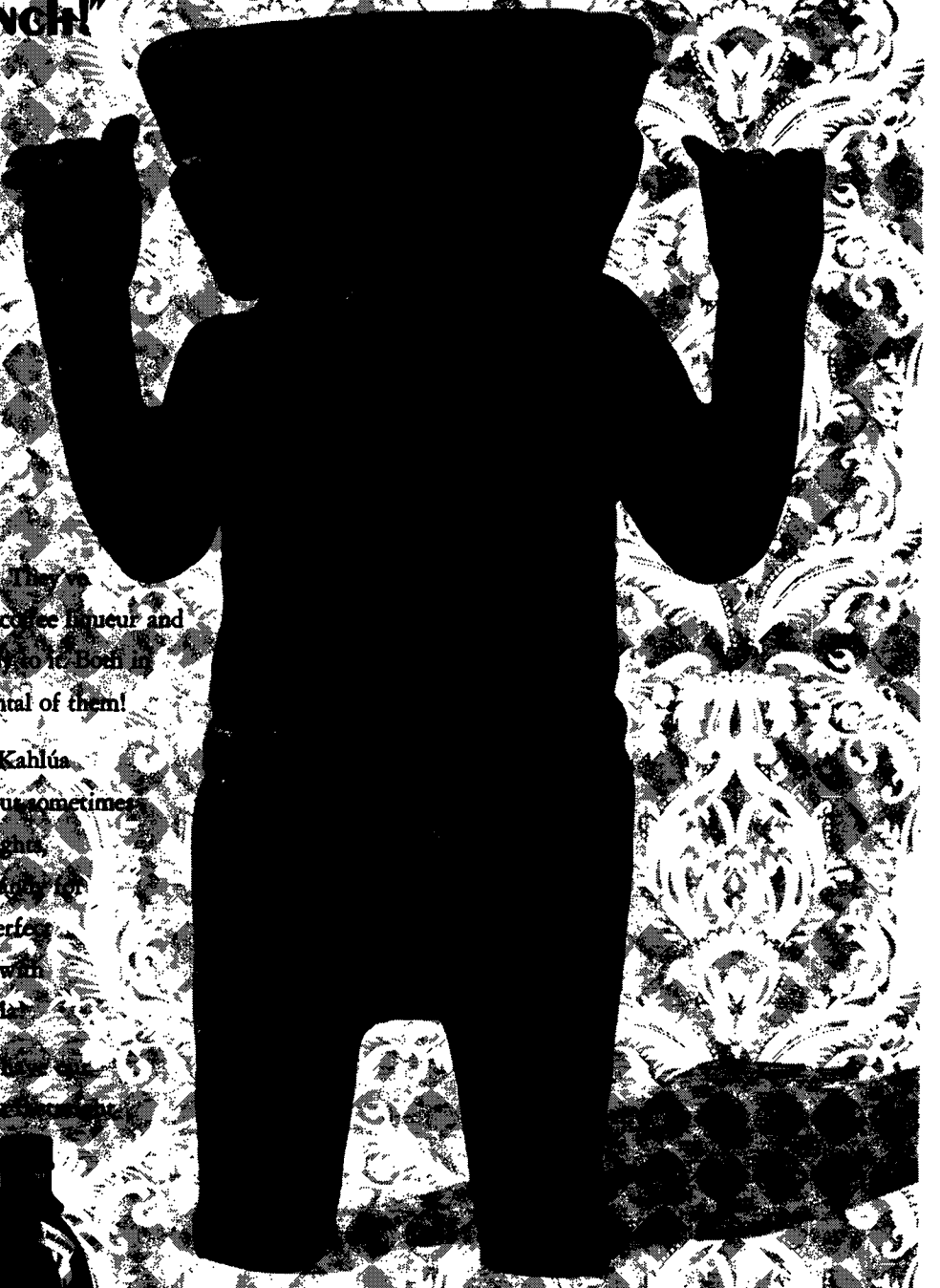

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Ethics and Therapy

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leslie H. Farber's article does justice neither to the arguments of the protagonists he has selected for his barbs, nor to the complexities of the moral issues posed by psychoanalysis or any other psychotherapeutic procedure ["Psychoanalysis & Morality," November 1965]. One may take exception to the positions of Dr. Szasz and Dr. London, but their viewpoints deserve to be fairly stated.

I share Dr. Farber's response to the therapist's rejection of responsibility . . . with respect to such . . . questions as abortion and suicide; but moral behavior also involves less dramatic matters like divorce, sexual behavior, obligations to children and parents, . . . and it is the therapist's role in regard to issues like these that concerns Dr. Szasz. It is easy to reject the extreme implications of Dr. Szasz's arguments, just as it is easy to agree that freedom of speech does not imply the freedom to shout "fire!" in a crowded theater. The difficult problem, however, and one which Dr. Farber conveniently ignores, is whether the therapist can participate in the decision process with all its moral ramifications without restricting the patient's freedom and —this is the heart of the matter— without engaging in manipulation of the patient. . . .

Professor London has shown that the position which Dr. Szasz favors is fundamentally untenable, that the values of the therapist must inevitably influence and shape the nature of the psychotherapeutic interchange and outcome. He argues that the therapist cannot escape the moral responsibility inherent in a relationship involving personality and behavior change, and that it behooves the therapist to be explicit not only as to the patient's goals but also as to his own objectives. To illustrate his argument, he contrasts insight and behavior therapy approaches. While he clearly favors the latter, the book was not intended to be an argument for the superiority of action or behavior therapies.

I happen to be less sanguine than Professor London about the ultimate utility of the so-called behavior therapies. However, that question is an empirical rather than a moral issue except insofar as empiricism implies a moral commitment. If a patient dreads crowds, or is mutilating himself through head banging, or is committing suicide through refusal to eat, I do not see how we are making him into an "experimental animal" by eliminating these symptoms through conditioning procedures. Not all human problems and conflicts are existential. Some are due to ignorance, some to lack of resources, and others to poor or fortuitous training. The behavior therapies have been applied with great ingenuity and skill to a variety of problems—autism in children, mental deficiency and certain schizophrenic symptoms—that have been unresponsive to other therapeutic procedures.

The failure of psychoanalysis, either in its existential or orthodox Freudian garb, to cope with psychosis, is patent. Its success, when applied to less severe emotional problems, has been difficult, if not impossible, to demonstrate. Considering the extent of human psychopathology, and the limited effectiveness of current psychotherapeutic practices, it seems to me far more irresponsible and "morally obtuse"—to borrow Dr. Farber's phrase—to dismiss a therapeutic procedure as wicked because it has its roots in animal experimentation than to eliminate crippling, albeit restricted fears, sexual impotence, enuresis, and schizophrenic isolation through the use of such experimental procedures.

Seymour Feshbach
Department of Psychology
University of California
Los Angeles, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Dr. Farber's criticisms of "action therapy" seem very unsound. To begin with, he claims that "human anxiety (unlike animal anxiety) always portends a moral issue whose claim may be disowned or distorted or acknowledged." But he offers no evidence to support this statement (which he calls a "fact") and it seems to be *prima facie* false. What was the moral issue portended by little Hans's fear of horses, for example, or by the common anxiety people feel in the presence of snakes? . . .

Dr. Farber then goes on to criticize the techniques of behavior therapy . . . although he offers no

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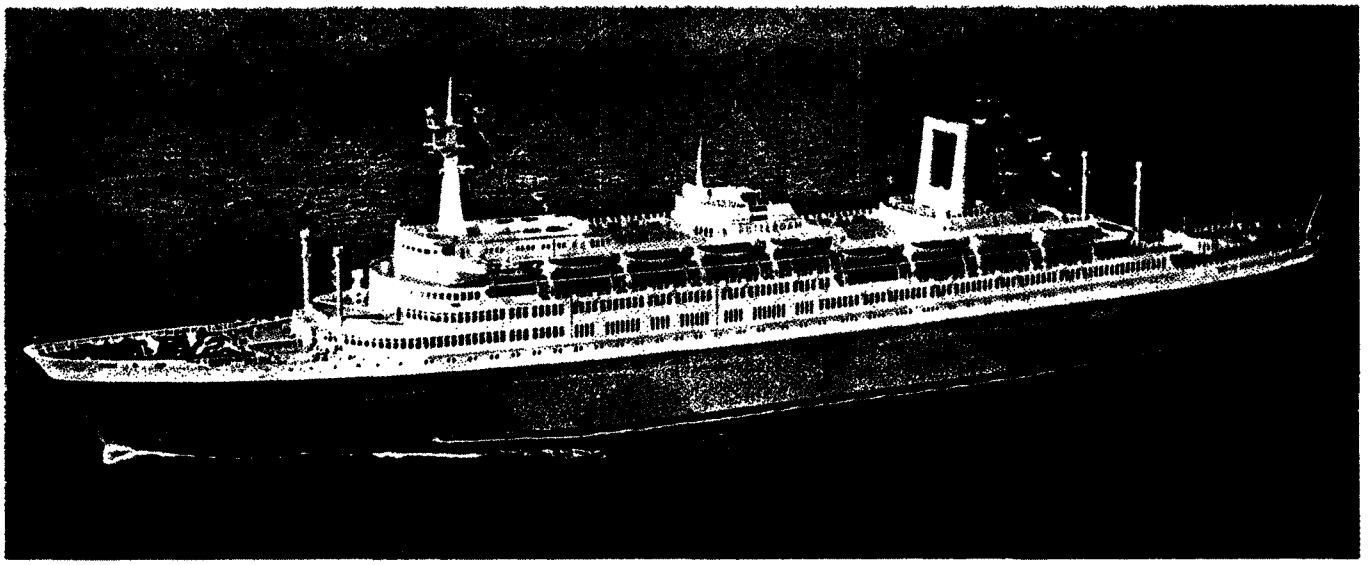

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evidence that they do not work. . . . He thinks they may result in after-effects . . ., that, following this kind of therapy, the patient will be like an automaton with no control over his own life, but, again, he gives no evidence, . . . arguing from *a priori* grounds. . . . The case studies I have read, however, do not support Dr. Farber's view. On the contrary, they show that once freed of their anxieties and neurotic symptoms, patients seem to have reached a point, at last, where they are in control and are able to realize their potentialities. They also report that they feel much better, which I, for one, do not consider irrelevant. Of course, there is a great danger, as with all powerful instruments, that the techniques of behavioral therapy can be used for evil as well as for good. But less effective instruments . . . do not even have the potentiality for good.

MARSHALL MISSNER
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Dr. Farber's revulsion at the methods of the behavioral psychologists (curing anxiety by "conditioning" . . .) is, I think, shared by most of us, but is the explanation he gives of that revulsion adequate? He writes, "Human anxiety . . . always portends a moral issue. . . . To shock . . . or coax a human being out of anxiety as though it were mere bad behavior is to rob him of the moral potentiality to contend with his painful lot."

. . . Following Dr. Farber's reasoning, one is led to the conclusion that the use of tranquillizing drugs, or, indeed, any means that do not include a conscious confronting of the "moral issue" allegedly always at the heart of an anxiety neurosis, is immoral. . . . But why must we assume that every anxiety portends a moral issue? Might not some, at least, be symptoms of a chemical imbalance or other somatic cause . . .? Or even granting a moral cause, why *must* the patient be cured only by confronting it? Is not Dr. Farber's insistence on this point itself a moral judgment: that the cure ought to involve the punishment of unraveling the dilemma, often a very difficult one, that caused the suffering in the first place? I would hesitate to make that judgment on all patients, especially since, as anxiety neurotics, they have probably already suffered immensely.

Surely the correct criticism of the behavioralists' methods cannot be

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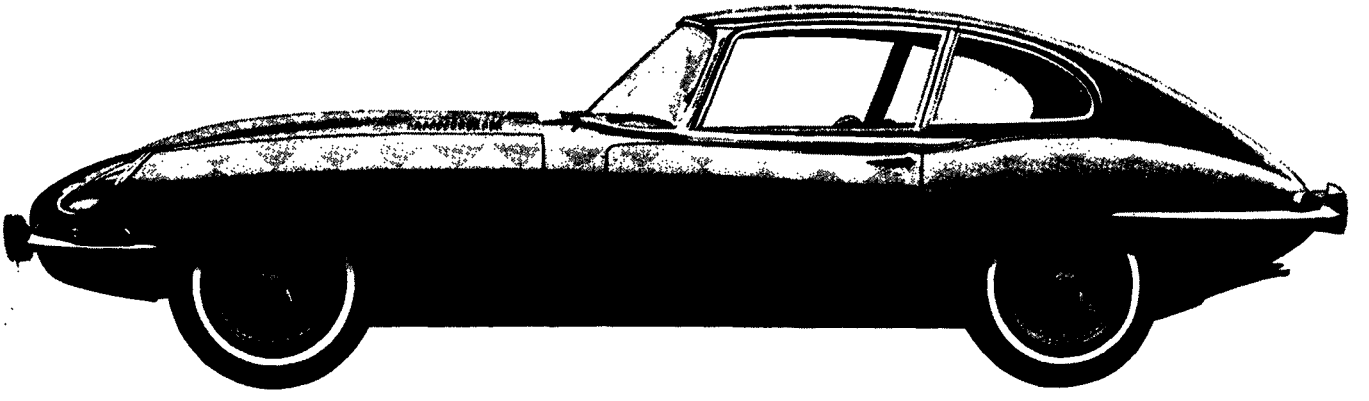

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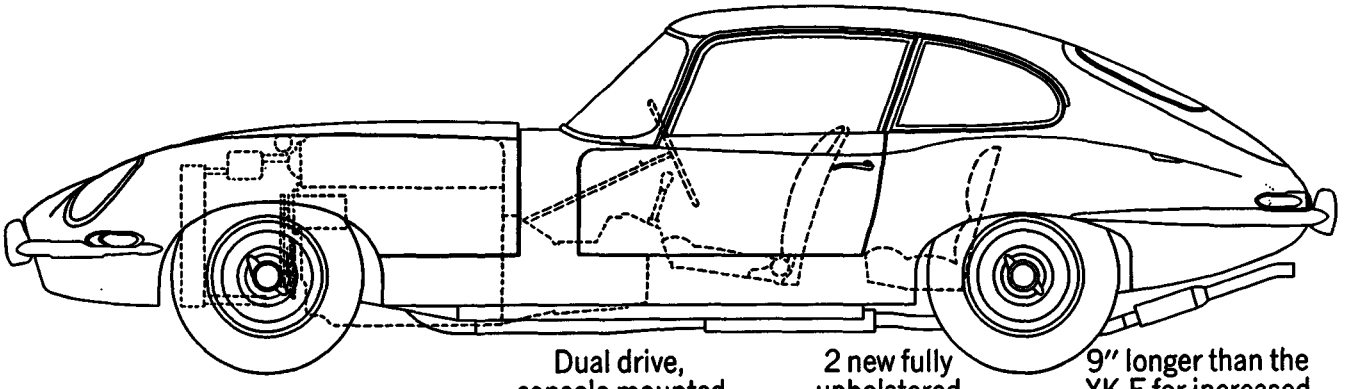

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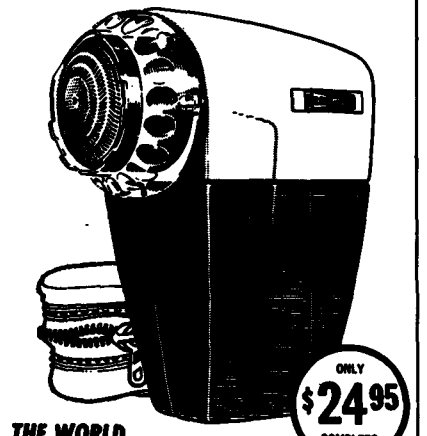

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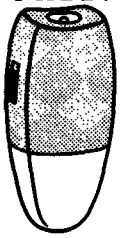

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that they work too easily. I admit I am at a loss to pin down precisely why their methods are wrong, which leads me to wonder whether the revulsion I share with Dr. Farber does not just stem from fear that the behaviorists may be right—we are just animals. . . .

DAVID SLAWSON
Washington, D.C.

Covering the Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As a practicing public-relations man in the Jewish field for over thirty years . . . I feel competent to take exception to Morris Laub's letter in your December [1965] issue, attacking the New York *Times*'s coverage of American-Jewish affairs ["Letters from Readers"].

For many years the *Times* has covered this area largely through a well-informed and sympathetic specialist, Irving Spiegel, and Laub's attack on him is completely unjustified. On a very difficult "beat," where there is often . . . controversy and . . . recrimination, Spiegel has presented a highly complicated, continuing story without sensationalism or prejudice. Certainly, the full inside story of Jewish communal life, as it is known to professionals in the field is not recorded, but is it the function of the *Times* to be a trade paper for the airing of differences . . . and party hatreds? . . .

Over the years, the *Times*'s coverage has been balanced and fair. My experience has shown me that opinions about it have all too often been determined by how a given individual was "covered" in a particular story involving himself or his organization. . . . Indeed, within the past year or two, as a result of increased emphasis on interpretation over and above the bare "news," this coverage has become even better—which may have added to the woes of the public-relations man whose occasional innocuous or self-seeking organizational story is less likely to get into print.

HENRY W. LEVY
American Jewish Public Relations Society
New York City

Power and Morality

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . A glaring exception to Oscar Gass's clarity elsewhere is his rationale in six steps for continuing our Vietnamese involvement ["The World Politics of Responsibility,"

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Carl Roth Vice President

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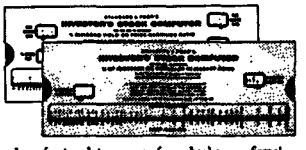

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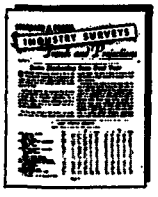

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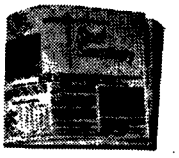

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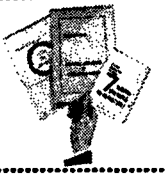

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December 1965]. Why must abandoning Vietnam imply abandoning Thailand and Malaya? Neither of these countries has Indochina's peculiar history of continuous full-scale warfare followed by partition and Communist consolidation.

Suppose that, either unilaterally or as a consequence of negotiations, we were to withdraw our forces from Vietnam, taking with us refugees who fear reprisals. Suppose further that we launched an economic, social, political, and military effort comparable in magnitude . . . to our present almost purely military effort, toward promoting prosperity and democracy in Thailand and Malaya. Would this require an impossible act of political imagination? And would it not be a more effective, permanent, and, if the thought can be excused, moral answer to Maoism than the grisly mess we are half responsible for in Vietnam today?

Mr. Gass implies that South Vietnam is open to socio-political improvement. *A fortiori,* Thailand and Malaya. While the Viet Cong has for some time depended on aid from the North, it must still be understood in large part as a social movement. The answer to Maoism must include reform to undercut its social roots. If we are unwilling or unable to promote reform, what's the use? There must be a better course than killing people for their own good.

DAVID L. GREENWOOD
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Oscar Gass and the government, whose line on Vietnam he echoes, have three main arguments: American withdrawal would (1) aid the world Communist movement; (2) encourage—by analogy with Munich—Soviet and Chinese aggression; and (3) condemn the South Vietnamese people to the brutality of a young Communist regime.

But this argument credits the world Communist movement with a strength it does not possess. There have been no successful revolutions engineered by Moscow or Peking. Where Communist movements have succeeded, they have been guided by strong indigenous parties who, after a brief period, become openly hostile to interference by other Communist countries. For example, in Eastern Europe the Soviet Union has lost control of everything except foreign policy—not only in Yugoslavia, Poland, and Rumania but in every other country as well; and in Yugoslavia and Albania it has lost control of foreign policy also . . .

Secondly, there have been remarkably few successful indigenous Communist movements. Though revolutionary movements typically have some affiliation with local Communists—and on occasion receive economic and military aid from the Soviets or Chinese—once in power the great majority of these movements become frankly national in character. Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, China, Guinea are examples. . . . Neither Communist nor U.S. power is much of a force in underdeveloped countries. . . . It is nationalism which has, and will, prevent the spread of Communism, not U.S. power.

U.S. policy should therefore make a distinction between revolutionary movements and invasion by the armed forces of the Soviet Union and China, [which] is why the Vietnam-Munich analogy is . . . foolish. The Viet Cong is not China. Even if we assume a unified Vietnam, ruled by the North, Chinese power would not materially benefit. A strong unified Vietnam could be expected to exert a large measure of independence, . . . in the style of Poland. . . . The continuing war in Asia, on the other hand, can only make North Vietnam dependent on China . . . Thus, it seems to me that involvement in Vietnam increases the chance of a general war, more than it prevents it. . . .

Lastly, I cannot see what laying waste to Vietnam . . . has to do with improving the quality of life for the South Vietnamese people.

DEE WILSON
Colorado Springs, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I would like to enter a caveat about the facile use of historical analogies to justify the American commitment in Vietnam.

According to Mr. Gass, the British decison not to resist the German remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 eliminated the last chance of stopping Hitler by limited war. Thereafter, as a result of the German strategic advantage, the belated attempt to halt German aggression in Poland escalated into a World War. . . . Applying this lesson to Vietnam in 1965, Mr. Gass explains, "Having failed . . .

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to bear the lesser evil, the United States would achieve the greater destruction."

The problem in Vietnam, however, is that the medicine of limited war may just as easily provoke the nuclear disease as retard it. In 1936, Hitler could have been repulsed without bloodshed, for the Germans had orders to retreat without resistance if they were opposed. In 1965, however, the Viet Cong have no such orders or desire, and the attempt to stop them may well bring on the holocaust that it is intended to avert. At the present pace of escalation there is an increasing likelihood that we shall be drawn into direct conflict with China, or even Russia, with the attendant dangers of nuclear war.

Our commitment in Vietnam may be wise, or it may not. There are plausible arguments on both sides. The contention, however, that South Vietnam in 1965 may be equated with the Rhineland is not, to my mind, one of them.

MARTIN WISHNATSKY
Harvard College
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Gass's analysis suffers from several blind spots. He fails to see that it is our own support of reaction in Asia, Africa, and Central and South America that is providing the impetus for the spread of the Communist influence he deplores. Nor does he seem to realize that rich and powerful as we are, there nevertheless are limitations to what we can accomplish, and that quite possibily . . . we can dissipate both our wealth and our strength by continuing in our present course.

. . . Sometimes Communists make more attractive offers to oppressed peoples than capitalists. Are we always going to prevent these people from making their own choice, when we consider it to be mistaken, or not in our interest? Are we then so infallible—in the Dominican Republic, for example? Our use of force always involves the risk of escalation into a nuclear war; is this a risk worth taking? . . . What can we win? Will Western civilization ever be the same after the next world war? Whose loss will be greater: . . . poor, undeveloped . . . China's, or rich, industrialized America's?

AARON HANKIN
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mrs. Gass rightfully broadens his focus to include an analysis of the nature of Chinese Communist expansion and the U.S. commitment to the remainder of South and Southeast Asia. However, a recognition that the Vietnamese situation is related to the remainder of the geographical area does not mean that the political situation in Vietnam is analagous to that of Malaya, Thailand, or India. . . .

No one can doubt that China's objectives have been to increase its power position at the expense of the U.S. and its allies in Asia . . . or that the Chinese Communists consider the national war of liberation *à la* Vietnam to be the vehicle by which these objectives can be achieved. The recent article entitled "Victory of the People's War" by the Chinese Minister of Defense, Lin Piao, makes this quite clear. However, there are important concepts within Chinese strategic doctrine which make it significantly different from the case of Nazi Germany, an analogy of Mr. Gass's.

The primary factor concerns what the Chinese term "the internal conditions." They claim that Vietnam represents a paradigm of conditions generally found in the non-industrial areas of the world. But in fact, does it? . . .

In neither Malaya nor Thailand do we find conditions as they are, or were, in Vietnam. There is little, if any, extreme anti-colonial nationalism or . . . alienation on the part of the indigenous populations. Malaya has already successfully fought its anti-Communist war, a rebellion which began as a result of grievances among a portion of the overseas Chinese residents in Malaya. The bulk of the Malay population supported the British, achieved political independence, and have established a relatively democratic and representative government. This is not to say that Malaya does not face severe problems with its Indonesian neighbor and its own ethnic minorities. However, the contention that these problems would be significantly increased by a Viet Cong political victory is very questionable.

So far as Thailand is concerned, there has been no European colonial experience at all, and although reformist sentiment does exist, it is likely that the military government would be supported in the event of Communist activity there. As in Malaya, this is due, in part, to the nature of that activity. . . . Trouble in Thailand will no doubt occur; in which case the Communists will find that the "water" within which their "fish" must live to survive will have been polluted by the antagonism of the mass of the Thai people.

It is, after all, legitimate for the Chinese to contend, for propaganda purposes, that if the "national war of liberation" is successful in Vietnam it will be successful everywhere. However, it is not necessary for us to accept their interpretation.

JERRY M. SILVERMAN
Department of Political Science
Central Washington State College
Ellensburg, Washington

Author's Reply

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

B. H. Haggin's remembrance of how Professor Morris Raphael Cohen "humiliated" students in his classroom at C.C.N.Y. is set a decade earlier than mine

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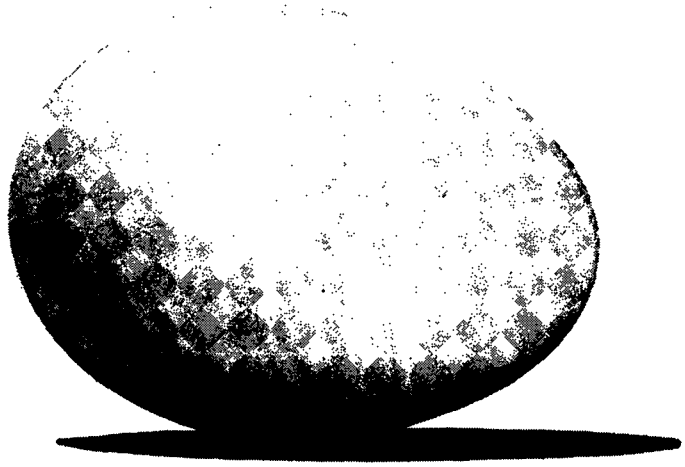

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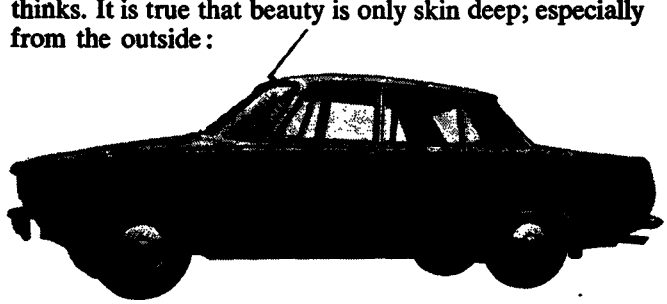

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["C.C.N.Y.—A Memoir," September 1965], and I have no way of knowing what Professor Cohen's classroom behavior was at that time ["Letters from Readers," March]....

The comments of other students of his in that earlier period (Sidney Hook and Ernest Nagel were among them) would give a fuller picture of Cohen during that period. Mr. Haggin's letter does not give such a full picture, it is not even a fair one-sided estimate: the line between sharpness, severity, sarcasm is qualitatively different from a method of humiliation.

I write *method* because Mr. Haggin is stating that Morris Cohen, knowing the difference between contradiction and the absence of contradiction, chose to avoid the distinction in responding to his students, humiliated them if the contradictions existed, and humiliated them if the contradictions did not exist by acting as though they existed. What worse can a teacher do in a classroom? But Mr. Haggin has no examples here, and that is understandable, for close to a half century has passed since then.

And I write *method* because of a word that I am very sorry Mr. Haggin, justly known as a careful writer, chooses to use. That is the word "operate." What a monstrous word to describe this man, a word that has come to mean connivance, petty and shady dealing, when Morris Cohen devoted his life to the practice of teaching, with a devotion, a concentration of intellect which has won him such glory.

An examination of Cohen's teaching style is not exhausted by the distinction between severity and humiliation. He was a many-sided teacher, mostly equable, often sunny, gentle, laughing (Paul Goodman wrote in 1931 that "I should sooner trust him, in the laughing mood, than anybody you might name").

But Mr. Haggin is trying to set the record straight, he is telling us that Morris Cohen used a method of humiliation. Why did Mr. Haggin sit in the classroom in the years 1919-1921 and watch this humiliation of others? What else was going on in the classroom? One continues to take courses with a teacher because he is gaining something. What was Mr. Haggin gaining? If there is anything to be learned from the humiliation of others, a semester is enough to learn that. Why a year, a couple of years? Surely Mr. Haggin is forgetting something of value.

Then the anecdote. Again, humiliation, and this time the resurrection of an old humiliation. Why is the name of this student used? Nothing is added. In this anecdote there is a ruthlessness neither to a real nor to an as-if contradiction, there is only a senseless brutality, or a brutality which makes sense only in the context of Mr. Haggin's notion of Cohen's method of humiliation.

Morris Cohen was not an idol, and Mr. Haggin, in this swift, one-dimensional assault, is not destroying him. Cohen's reputation as a great teacher is a solid historical fact, it rests on what he did *for* us, and the tone of Mr. Haggin's judgment must not be confused with its authority. For how would a teacher fare from the collective judgment of generations of humiliated students? Wouldn't he be spurned, quickly forgotten? But here we have loyalty, regard, affection. On the judgment of this letter, we are faced with a mystery about Morris Cohen's fame. There was no conspiracy, no publicity campaign, no operators pushing him; he made his way on his own, no mystery at all, he just had the great regard of most of his students. Neither Mr. Haggin nor I have the last word, we can only have our say.

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The Dominican Crisis

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Theodore Draper's article . . . was the clearest, most lucidly written explanation of the . . . events of last spring ["The Dominican Crisis: A Case Study in American Policy," December 1965].

But Mr. Draper's conclusions seemed disappointingly limited. He showed that American policy-makers are capable of tragic blunders, and that our confused approach to fighting Communism can result in the quelling of a democratic movement. What Mr. Draper apparently accepts, however, is the current U.S. policy of interfering forcibly wherever there *is*, patently, a Communist-controlled revolution.

This policy has justified the building up of massive military concentrations on the borders of Communist China, in Vietnam, on Quemoy, and in Thailand; we are committed to policing the entire world against Communist uprisings. As Mr. Draper implied, "Communism," or "Marxism-Leninism," is an even more nebulous concept to poor and illiterate populations than it is to Pentagon and State Department officials. So, almost inevitably, there will come a time when resentment against the U.S. presence, combined with general discontent, produces a Communist-led uprising somewhere in Asia or Africa. China, goaded to exasperation at the constant, overwhelming threat of American arm-

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ed might so close to its borders, may by then have developed the means to deliver nuclear bombs. If her fervor to gain allies matches our own, she will eventually make, and honor, the same sort of "commitments" that we once made to Premier Diem. If we interfere, and according to our present policy we would, China and the United States will face a war that will destroy either or both nations. . . .

Presumably we are in Vietnam to teach China that we are willing to stop the spread of her influence anywhere, at any time. Meanwhile the lesson is costing China nothing, and is making enemies of Asians who are both appalled at the brutalities caused by the war and increasingly irritated by the growing presence of white Westerners in their hemisphere. Whatever the outcome of the Vietnam war, it will not be democracy, either for North or South Vietnam. I suggest that the price in terms of blood and human misery would be far less if the United States refused to intervene in Communist-inspired revolutions. Given a generation of peace, even Communist dictatorships can soften into systems approaching freedom, as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union have demonstrated. . . . But under present American policy no such generation of peace seems possible, and, while we are waiting for China to develop retaliatory power, our determination to quell Communist revolutions wherever they occur seems destined to produce the same kind of blunders that characterized the Dominican crisis.

RACHELLE MARSHALL.
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . History is not going to judge the rightness or wrongness of American action by whether or not U.S. policy was really neutral. . . . The paragraphs devoted to the incident fifty years from now will be concerned with the same paramount question on which the intervention decision hung: Is this or is this not a Communist revolution and will they win it if the U.S. doesn't intervene? Mr. Draper . . . doesn't prove Mr. Johnson's affirmative answer was wrong.

ROBERT R. RICHARDSON
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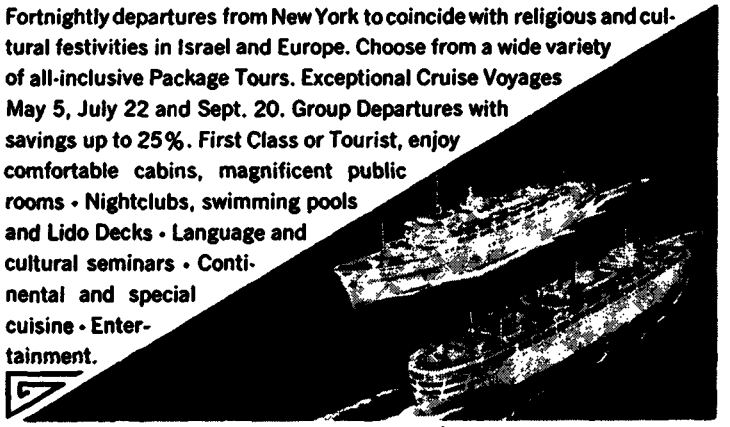

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In a totalitarian regime, . . . domestic propaganda . . . can be handled by such primitive machinery as censorship, bans, intimidation, etc. In the U.S., however, so complex is the matter of control, that domestic propaganda must be, and in fact is, "computerized." . . . When the process runs smoothly, the end-result . . . often surpasses the cruder totalitarian methods.

The Dominican crisis can be seen as an instance of "computer-breakdown," . . . one which enabled Draper—and before him Szulc *et al.*—to make his case with such devastating force. . . .

There is nothing in Mr. Draper's report to suggest that the cynical *Realpolitik* behind the Dominican crisis is unique either in Latin American policy or elsewhere, specifically Southeast Asia. The difference between our Dominican policy and our Vietnam policy is that in the former the "computer" collapsed, while in Vietnam it has functioned fairly well. . . .

B. MARGULIS
Waltham, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Among other reasons the present administration . . . has met with little resistance in . . . its foreign policy is the widespread assumption that on such questions the President is infallible. . . . He is ascribed this attribute because it is generally supposed that the realities of international politics present him with only a limited set of alternative roles. . . : "left extremism," "right extremism," and the sensible, obvious, realistic, moderation of the middle. By definition, the "two extremes" are usually considered "ideological," so it follows that the only possible option available to the ultimate decision-maker on foreign policy—who cannot afford risking the "interest" and "security" of the nation with "radical" experimentation—is to rely on the tried-and-true pragmatic solutions. . . . As long as these assumptions hold, we may expect further foreign "policy" of the Dominican variety. But we may at least hope that its accounting by journalists like Draper will expose its claim to . . . infallibility.

JON AARONSON
East Lansing, Michigan

[More correspondence on Mr. Draper's article, and Mr. Draper's reply, will appear in our May issue.]

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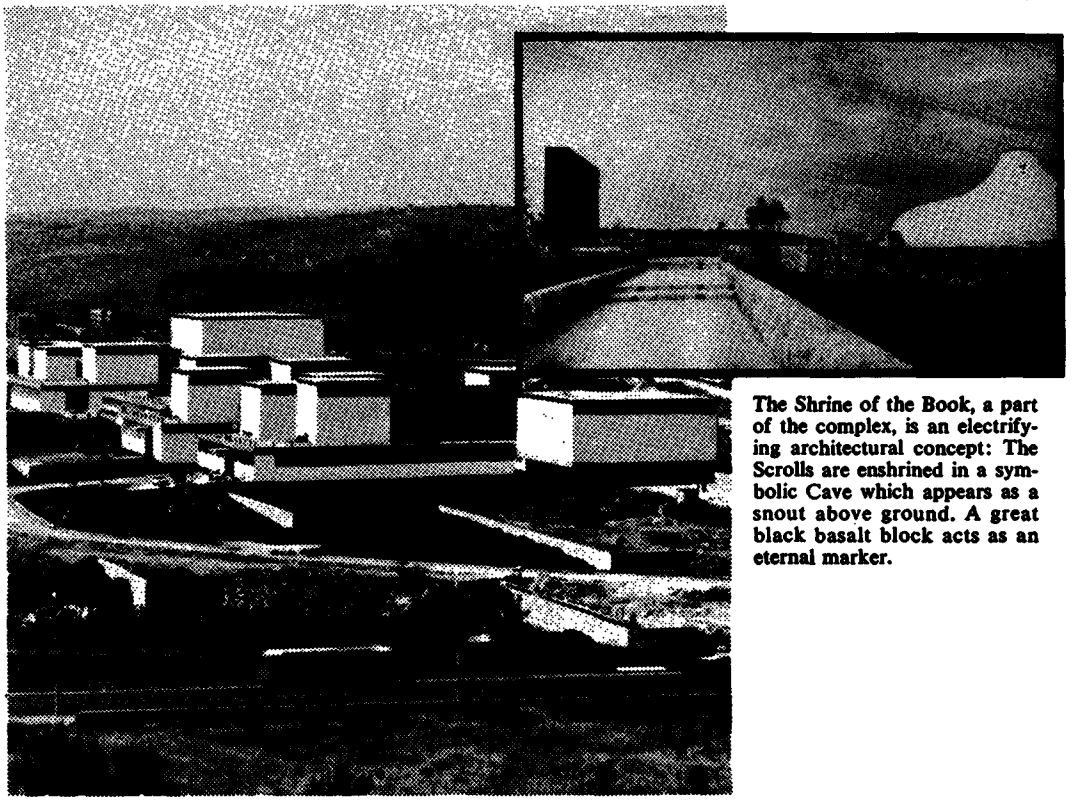

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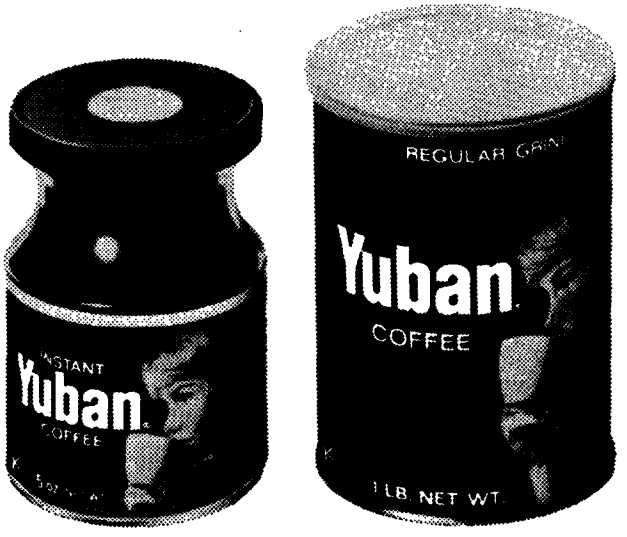

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THE FUTURE OF CAPITALISM

ROBERT L. HEILBRONER

FOR ROUGHLY the last century and a half the dominant system of economic organization in most of the West has been that of capitalism. In all likelihood, barring the advent of a catastrophic war, capitalism will continue as the dominant system of the Western world during the remainder of this century and well into the next. Although it will inevitably change, will likely suffer considerable duress over the next decades, and in the longer run will gradually give way to a very different kind of social order, for our lives and for those of our children, capitalism bids fair to confront us as the prevailing form of social organization in those nations where it is now solidly entrenched.

It seems to me that all serious social analysis and prediction must start from some such premise. At any rate, it is my premise, and I propose to explore —with all the uncertainties and risks inherent in such an enterprise—the social changes available to us within the limits of capitalism in the future.

But how can we establish these "limits"? Perhaps we can shed an initial light on the question if we imagine asking some perceptive observer in, say, 13th-century France what were the limits of feudalism. Our observer might be hard put to find an answer, particularly if he looked about him at the striking variety of forms that feudalism assumed in the various domains of Europe. Yet undoubtedly we could have suggested an answer to him that would have sounded reasonable. It is that certain kinds of economic and social change were unimaginable—indeed impossible—in 13th-century France because they would have implied the establishment of some totally different form of social organization. To take a central instance, it would have been impossible to have replaced the traditional ties, established customs, and fixed obligations by which the manorial economy hung together with some radically different system, such as the cash markets that were already disrupting the settled tenor of feudal economic life, because a change of this dimension would have critically undermined the power of the lord, elevated out of all proportion that of the parvenu class of merchants, and thereby destroyed the fixed hierarchy of status that was the very backbone of the feudal social structure. Thus, one meaning we can give to the idea of "limits" in a society is very simple: It is those boundaries of change that would so alter the functional base of a society, or the structure of privilege built on that base, as to displace a given social order by a new one.

In terms of the immediate subject of our essay, this draws the broad limits of American capitalism in the last third of the 20th century with reasonable fixity. To take a few examples: it is certainly beyond the present limits of capitalism to replace the guiding principle of production for profit by that of production for use; it is impossible to nationalize the great corporations or to end the private ownership of the means of mass communication; and it is impossible to end the concentration of wealth in private hands. One can debate whether all or any of these changes are desirable, but there is little point in debating whether they are realizable. Barring only some disaster that would throw open the gates to a radical reconstruction of society, they are not.

WHAT WE have established thus far, however, is only the first and most obvious answer to the question of what we mean by the "limits" of social change. For if we now return to the 13th century, we could imagine suggesting to our medieval observer another approach to the idea of feudal limits. Rather than pointing out to him the contemporary incompatibility of the market system, we might be able to show him the immense long-term historical momentum of the emergent forces of the monetized economy. Indeed, we might even be able to bring him to see that by the end of another four or five centuries, feudalism would have virtually disappeared, and that an economic organization of society once incompatible with feudalism would have triumphed over it.

From such a perspective, the task of delineating the limits of feudalism becomes a different one. It is no longer to discover what cannot be done in the short run, but to explore what *can* be done, and how, in doing it, the social structure may slowly and subtly alter, making possible still further change in the future.

ROBERT L. HEILBRONER is the author of a number of works on economic theory and practice, including *The Making of Economic Society* and *The Great Ascent*. The present essay will be included, in somewhat different form, in Professor Heilbroner's new book, *The Limits of American Capitalism*, to be published next fall by Harper & Row.

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It need hardly be said that one cannot project such a long evolutionary—or possibly revolutionary—advance in close detail. The precise route to be taken, the pace of progress, the roadblocks where the invading forces of a new society may be temporarily halted or even thrown back—all this surpasses any power of analysis we now have. But the grand line of march is not beyond our ability to foresee. Looking back at 13th-century France, we can see how defenseless were its castle walls against the insinuating influence of the market system. In similar fashion, it should be possible to explore the limits of capitalism in America, not alone in terms of changes that cannot now be accommodated by the business system, but in terms of those forces that are altering capitalism, like feudalism in an earlier day, in ways that will eventually cause its social and economic structure to be displaced by another.

I

We cannot, however, explore change until we answer a prior question: Why do societies resist change? A full explanation of social inertia must reach deep into the psychological and technical underpinnings of the human community. But in the process of gradual social adjustment it is clear enough where to look for the main sources of the resistance to change. They are to be found in the structure of privilege inherent in all social systems.

Privilege is not an attribute we are accustomed to stress when we consider the construction of *our* social order. When pressed, we are, of course, aware of its core institutions in capitalism—the right to reap private benefits from the use of the means of production and the right to utilize the dynamic forces of the marketplace for private enrichment. The element of privilege in these institutions, however—that is, their operative result in favoring certain individuals and classes—is usually passed over in silence in favor of their purely functional aspects. Thus, private property is ordinarily explained as being no more than a convenient instrumentality for the efficient operation of an economic system, or the market elements of Land, Labor, and Capital as purely neutral "factors of production."

Now these institutions and relationships do indeed fulfill the purposes for which they are advertised. But this is not the only use they have. Land, Labor, and Capital are not just functional parts of a mechanism but are categories of social existence that bring vast differences in life chances with them. It is not just Labor on the one hand, and Land or Capital on the other; it is the Bronx on the one hand and Park Avenue on the other. Similarly, private property is not merely a pragmatic arrangement devised for the facilitation of production, but a social institution that brings to some members of the community a style of life qualitatively different from that afforded to the rest. In a word, the operation of capitalism as a *functional* system results in a structure of wealth and income characteristic of capitalism as a *system of privilege*—a structure in which the top two per cent of American families own between two-thirds and three-quarters of all corporate stock, and enjoy incomes roughly ten times larger than the average received within the nation as a whole.

The mere presence of these concentrations of wealth or large disparities of income does not in itself differentiate the system of privilege under capitalism from those of most other societies in history. Rather, what marks off our system is that wealth and income within capitalism are not mainly derived from non-economic activity, such as war, plunder, extortionate taxation, etc., but arise from the activity of marketers or the use of property by its owners.

This mixture of the functional and the privileged aspects of capitalism has a curious but important political consequence. It is that privilege under capitalism is much less "visible," especially to the favored groups, than privilege under other systems. The upper classes in feudalism were keenly alive to the gulf that separated them from the lower classes, and perfectly open about the need for preserving it. The upper groups under capitalism, on the other hand, are typically unaware that the advantages accruing to them from following the paths of the market economy constitute in any sense or fashion a "privilege."

This lack of self-awareness is rendered even more acute by virtue of another differentiating characteristic of privilege under capitalism. It is that privilege is limited to the advantages inherent in the economic structure of society. That is, the same civil and criminal law, the same duties in war and peace, apply to both economically privileged and unprivileged. It would be a mistake to concentrate on obvious differences in the application of the law as being of the essence. Rather, one must contrast the single system of law and obligation under capitalism—however one-sidedly administered—with the *differing* systems that apply to privileged and unprivileged in other societies.

The divorce of economic from political or social privilege brings up the obvious fact that, at least in democratic societies like America, the privileged distribution of economic rewards is exposed to the corrective efforts of the democratic electorate. The question is, however, why the structure of privilege has remained relatively intact, despite so long an exposure to the potentially leveling influences of the majority.

In part, we can trace the answer to the very "invisibility" of privilege we have just described. Furthermore, in all stable societies the structure of privilege appears to the general public not as a special dispensation, but as the natural order of

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things, with which their own interests and sentiments are identified. This is especially true under capitalism, where the privileges of wealth are open, at least in theory, and to some extent in practice, to all comers. Finally, the overall results of capitalism, particularly in America during the entire 20th century and recently in Europe as well, have been sufficiently rewarding to hold anti-capitalist sentiment to a relatively small segment of the population.

That the defense of privilege is the active source of resistance to social and economic change may appear so obvious as scarcely to be worth emphasizing. Obvious or not, it is a fact too often passed over in silence. It seems to me impossible to analyze the nature of the opposition to change without stressing the vulgar but central fact that every person who is rich under capitalism is a beneficiary of its inherent privileges. Taking the American system as it now exists, it seems fair to assert that the chance to own and acquire wealth constitutes a primary—perhaps even a dominating—social motivation for most men, and that those who enjoy or aspire to these privileges will not readily acquiesce in changes that will substantially lessen their chances of maintaining or gaining them.

II

The touchstone of privilege provides an indispensable key when we now return to our main theme. If it does not give us an exact calculus by which to compute what changes will and will not be acceptable, it does give us an angle of entry, a point of view, without which attempts to cope with the problem of social change are apt to have no relevance at all.

Take, for example, the problem of the poverty that now afflicts some 30 or 40 million Americans. One alleged cause of this poverty has always directly stressed the privileges of capitalism. This is the view that poverty under capitalism is largely ascribable to wage exploitation. There is clearly an element of truth here, in that the affluence of the favored groups in capitalism does indeed stem from institutions that divert income from the community at large into the channels of dividends, interest, rent, monopoly returns, etc. It is by no means clear, however, that the amount of this diversion, if redistributed among the masses, would spell the difference between their poverty and their well-being. On the contrary, it is now generally acknowledged that the level of wages reflects workers' productivity more than any other single factor, and that this productivity in turn is primarily determined by the quantity and the quality of the capital equipment of the economic system.

Certainly, the productivity of the great mass of workers under capitalism has steadily increased, and so have their real wages. Today, for example, industrial workers in America cannot be classified as "poor" by prevailing absolute standards, if we take $4,000 a year as defining a level of minimum adequacy for a small family. Although wage poverty is clearly present in capitalism, it is primarily restricted to the agricultural areas and to the lowest categories of skills in the service trades. No small part of it is accounted for by discrimination against Negroes, and by the really shocking levels of income of Negro farm and service labor. On the other hand, the proportion of the labor force that is afflicted with this poverty is steadily diminishing. Farmers, farm managers, and farm laborers together will probably constitute only 5 per cent of the labor force within a decade. The low-paid non-farm common laborer, who constituted over 12 per cent of the working force in 1900, makes up only 5 per cent of it today and will be a smaller percentage tomorrow.

There remains, nevertheless, the question of how much the existing level of wages could be increased if the categories of capitalist privilege did not exist. Since it is difficult to estimate accurately the total amount of "privileged" income under capitalism, let us take as its convenient representation the sum total of all corporate profits before tax. In the mid 1960's, these profits exceeded $70 billion a year. If this sum were distributed equally among the 70 million members of the work force, the average share would be $1,000. For the lowest-paid workers, such as migrant farm laborers, this would represent an increase in annual incomes of 100 per cent or more—an immense gain. For the average industrial worker, however, the gain would be in the neighborhood of 20-25 per cent, certainly a large increase but not one that would fundamentally alter his living standards.

Thus, insofar as the institutions of capitalism constitute a drain upon non-privileged groups, it can be fairly said that they are only marginally responsible for any inadequacy in the prevailing general level of income. Individual companies may indeed be capable of vastly improving the lot of their workers—General Motors makes nearly as much gross profit on a car as it pays out in wages, and "could," therefore, virtually double its wages. But for the economy as a whole, no such large margin of redistribution is possible. So long, then, as the defense of these privileges does not result in substantially *increasing* the share of national income accruing to the privileged elements of the nation, it seems fair to conclude that the level of material well-being under capitalism is limited mainly by the levels of productivity it can reach. If the trend of growth of the past century is continued, the average level of real wages for industrial labor should double in another two to three decades. This would bring average earnings to a level of about $10,000 and would effectively spell the abolition of wage poverty, under any definition.

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This conclusion does not close our investigation into the relationship between poverty and privilege, but rather directs it toward what is now revealed as the principal cause of poverty. This is the fact that large groups within the population—the aged, the handicapped, the sick, the unemployed, the castaways in rural backwaters—have no active tie into the market economy and must therefore subsist at the very meager levels to which non-participants in the work process are consigned. There is only one way that their condition can be quickly alleviated, but that one way would be very effective indeed. This is to redistribute to them enough income earned or received by more favored members of the community to bring them to levels of economic decency. A program with this objective would require some $10- to $12 billion above the public assistance that the poor now receive in this country. Such a sum would amount to approximately a seventh of corporate profits before tax. Alternatively, shared among the 11- or 12 million consumer units who constitute the top 20 per cent of the nation's income receivers, it would require an average additional tax of roughly $1,000 on incomes that average $16,000.

In both cases, in other words, a program to eliminate sheer need among the poor would constitute a sizable incursion into the incomes enjoyed by favored groups, although hardly such an invasion as to constitute the elimination of these privileges. Thus, the failure to carry out such a program cannot be laid to the "objective" or functional difference that such a redistribution would entail, but simply to the general unwillingness of those who enjoy higher incomes to share their good fortune with those who do not. As Adam Walinsky has very aptly put it, "The middle class knows that the economists are right when they say that poverty could be eliminated if we only will it; they simply do not will it."

To what extent does that conclusion, then, lead to the prospect of alleviating poverty within the next generation or so? In the short run the outlook is not very hopeful. Given the temptations of luxury consumption and the general lack of deep concern in a nation lulled by middle-class images of itself, it is doubtful that very effective programs of social rescue can be launched within the next decade or two. Yet, of all the problems confronting capitalism, poverty seems the least likely to be blocked permanently by the resistance of privilege. Tax receipts are now growing at the rate of some $6 billion a year simply as a consequence of the growth of the level of output, and this flow of funds to the government will increase over the future. It may be that these receipts will be used for larger arms expenditures for some years, but assuming that full-scale war will be averted, sooner or later the arms budget must level off. Thereafter the funds will become available for use either in the form of tax reductions—an operation which normally favors the well-to-do—or as the wherewithal for a major assault on the slums, etc. In this choice between the claims of privilege and those of social reform, the balance is apt to be tipped by the emerging new national elites, especially from government. In addition, a gradual liberalization of the prevailing business ideology is likely to ease opposition to measures that clearly promise to improve the quality of society without substantially affecting its basic institutions of privilege.

It is idle to predict when Harlem will be reconstructed and Appalachia reborn, since so much depends on the turn of events in the international arena. Yet it seems to me that the general dimensions of the problem make it possible to envisage the substantial alleviation—perhaps even the virtual elimination—of massive poverty within the limits of capitalism three or four decades hence, or possibly even sooner.

The elimination of poverty is, however, only part of a larger problem within capitalism—the problem of income distribution. Hence, we might now look to the chances that capitalism will alter the moral anomalies of wealth as well as those of poverty.

Here it is not so easy to foresee a change in the operational results of the system of privilege. Since the 1930's, the political intent of the public has clearly been to bring about some lessening of the concentration of income that goes to the very rich, and some diminution of the enclaves of family wealth that have passed intact from one generation to the next. Thus, we have seen the introduction of estate taxes that levy imposts of about one-third on net estates of only $1 million, and of fully half on net estates of $5 million; and these rates have been supplemented by measures to prevent the tax-free passage of wealth before death by gift.

Since the enactment of these taxes, a full generation has passed, and we would therefore expect to see some impact of the legislation in a significant lowering of the concentration of wealth among the top families. Instead, we find that the share held by the top families has decreased only slightly—from 33 per cent of all personal wealth in 1922, to 29 per cent in 1953 (the last year for which such calculations exist). Concentration of stock—the single most important medium for the investment of large wealth—has shown no tendency to decline since 1922. Equally recalcitrant before egalitarian measures is the flow of income to topmost groups. Legal tax rates on top incomes have risen from 54 per cent under President Hoover to over 90 per cent in the 1940's and early 1950's, and to 72 per cent in the mid 1960's. The presumed higher incidence of taxes at the peak of the income pyramid has, however, been subverted by innumerable stratagems of trusts, family sharing of income, capital gains, deferred compensation, or

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other means of tax avoidance or outright tax evasion.

There is no indication that this resistive capacity of the system of privilege is likely to weaken, at least within the time span of a generation. Nor is there any sign that the "natural workings" of the system will lessen the flow of income to the top. The statistics of income distribution clearly show a slow but regular drift of income *toward* the upper end of the spectrum. Three per cent of all income was received by income receivers in the $15,000-and-up brackets in 1947; in 1963, in terms of constant dollars, this fraction had grown to eight. This determined self-perpetuation of large concentrations of private wealth is likely to continue—afflicting the social order with that peculiar irresponsibility that is the unhappy hallmark of the system. The power of wealth is by no means the only source of power in America and may, in fact, be expected to decline. But the voice of money still speaks very loudly, and the capacity of wealth to surmount the half-acquiescent opposition of a democratic political system promises that it will continue to resound in America for a long while to come.

III

The maldistribution of income and the social problems that spring from it can no longer be said to threaten the viability—although it may seriously jeopardize the social peace—of capitalism. This cannot be said, however, of a second problem—the economic malfunction that has periodically racked capitalism over the last hundred years and that nearly caused its demise in the 1930's.

The persistent breakdowns of the capitalist economy can all be traced to a single underlying cause: the anarchic or planless character of capitalist production. So long as the output of individual firms is guided solely by the profitable opportunities open to each, without regard to the state of the market as a whole, economic short-circuits must result whenever the output of all firms fails to dovetail with the structure of demand, or when the production plans of the business community as a whole are not adequate to cope with the independently formulated savings plans of the community at large. In a milieu of huge enterprises and enormous fixed investments, such miscalculations or imbalances carry the potential of a major disruptive impact.

Hence, it is not surprising that reformers have long advocated planning as the remedy for capitalist depressions or stagnation. The trouble has been, however, that much of the planning which its partisans have urged upon it has been incompatible with the institutions of capitalism. For example, proposals to nationalize the core of heavy industry or to convert the biggest corporations into quasi-public utilities, may have much to recommend them along strictly economic lines, but they all infringe the preserves of private property or of the market to a degree intolerable to the American business community.

This does not mean, however, that planning is therefore ruled out. On the contrary, a great deal of planning is virtually inevitable over the coming decades, but it is likely to be used in support of the main institutions of capitalism rather than as a means of replacing them.

One such planning instrument is certain to be the reliance on the government's fiscal powers to maintain aggregate demand. Although we are still only in the early stages of experience with public demand-creation, there is little doubt that a bold use of fiscal mechanisms can virtually guarantee a steady or rising level of total expenditure. Moreover, since demand-creation involves little or no interference with individual markets or business, it impinges little, if at all, on the preserves of privilege. Tax cuts, for example, are certain to be welcomed by business and upper-income groups. Additional spending, so long as it is within the established areas of public concern—arms, roads, schools, rivers and harbors, conservation, and perhaps now social welfare—is also welcomed as a source of new business.

There remains, to be sure, a body of ideological resistance to the use of fiscal measures of a compensatory sort, compounded of an ignorance of public finance and a shrewd foreboding that the assumption of public economic responsibility, no matter how useful at the moment, is freighted with serious long-term implications. Yet it seems likely that this is a view of dwindling importance. A very considerable segment of business backed the controversial Kennedy tax cut, and the undoubted success of that policy should pave the way for further measures of the same kind. In addition, the non-business elites, especially from the academic and government establishments, are strongly in favor of fiscal controls to buoy up the system, and their influence in securing the bold use of these measures may be very important or even decisive. Thus, there seems a reasonable expectation that measures to safeguard the economy against the collapse of effective demand lie well within the ambit of capitalism today.

What is more difficult to judge is the extent to which capitalism will be able to go beyond general fiscal planning into planning on a more detailed basis for the achievement of broad welfare objectives. Here the experience of Europe since the war is relevant. In nearly every nation of Europe we have seen the formulation of planning techniques that go considerably beyond the mere application of fiscal leverage, to the conscious "design" of the economic future. The very fact that European capitalism has taken this turn puts it beyond argument that a considerable amount of indirect planning is compatible with the main institutions of capitalism.

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On the other hand, the growth of European planning owes much to the particular traditions of European capitalism, including the more or less formalized structures of employers' federations and the pronounced "*étatist*" tradition in many states. The absence of comparable institutions and history makes doubtful the possibility of a wholesale transplantation of European forms of planning to America. Furthermore, unlike its sister capitalisms across the Atlantic, the United States has not become accustomed to the public ownership of transportation or utilities, or to a large public-housing sector, or to the development of a strong system of public welfare.

As a result, the United States has always entertained an exaggerated suspicion of all invasions by the public authority into private terrain. Hence the extent and speed with which American capitalism may evolve in the direction of detailed economic planning would seem to depend primarily on whether circumstances arise that require such techniques. If, for example, the continued incursion of technology, coupled with a very large inflow of young people into the labor market, should create an employment crisis during the next decade, some form of industrial planning would quite possibly emerge as an instrument of social policy. In that case, policies designed deliberately to create employment through a substantial enlargement of public activities at state or local levels, or—looking farther ahead—the designation of a civil sector, such as the rebuilding of the cities, as the peacetime equivalent of the military sector, might well show up as part of the practicable social agenda.

Capitalism, then, can achieve considerable change within the boundaries imposed by its market mechanisms and privileges of private property. But there are also important limits beyond which it cannot go—at least within the foreseeable future. Primary among these is the continuing requirement that the economic participants in a capitalist world—even in a planned capitalist world—behave in the manner that is required of them if the market mechanism is to work. That is, they must act as "economic men," buying cheap and selling dear, allowing relative remunerations to weigh heavily in their choices of occupations or employment, setting acquisitive aims high in the hierarchy of life goals. These marketing traits are not merely pervasive private idiosyncrasies that can be dispensed with if they are no longer esteemed. They are integral to, and necessary for, the successful operation of a market system. In a setting of bare subsistence and newly-risen entrepreneurs there is little difficulty in adducing the acquisitive behavior required to run a capitalist economy. But in a more advanced and affluent society, where the primary drives of self-preservation begin to fail, the necessary marketing behavior must be sustained by supplementary motives of emulation and competitive striving. Thus, the endless and relentless exacerbation of economic appetites in advanced capitalism is not merely a surface aberration, but a deeply-rooted functional necessity to provide the motivations on which the market system depends.

This thralldom to an overweening economic imperative of sales and profits and its accompanying worship of a calculus of income are features of capitalism that cannot be eliminated by planning. A planned capitalism of the future, however rid of its gross malfunctions, will nonetheless be one in which men are subservient to the economic demands of a market environment.

Nowhere is this apt to pose a more serious problem than along the extended frontier where technology interacts with society. This interaction takes two forms. One, which we may call the *direct effect,* is revealed as the immediate change in the environment brought about by the application of a new technique such as the computerized control of production, or the use of a new product such as a jet transport. This effect, as we know from experience, may bring radical changes into economic or social life, but these changes have, at least, been consciously introduced into society (although often with inadequate appreciation of their immediate impact).

But there is as well an *indirect effect* of technology that diffuses throughout society as the secondary consequence of new machinery or new processes. Thus, the indirect effect of the new technology of automation is unemployment; the indirect effect of the new technology of medicine and health is an aging population; the indirect effect of the technology of war is the creation of a military-industrial economic sector. Not least we find, as a general indirect effect of all modern technology, an increasing complexity, size, and hierarchical organization of production, which gives rise in turn to a growing need for public intervention into the economic process itself.

Against this tremendous invasion of technology, a market economy offers but one instrument of control—the profit or loss stemming from the direct effect of a particular technology. As to its side-effects, the market mechanism proper has no controls whatsoever. As a result, the invasion of technology becomes an essentially disruptive force, continuously upsetting the patterns of life in a haphazard manner. Under a system that abdicates as much decision-making as possible to the rule of profit, the possibilities for a rational restraint over this force that rearranges our lives thus shrinks to a minimum. Capitalism is essentially defenseless before the revolutionizing impact of its technical drive. Of all the limits to which capitalism is subject, this is the most unyielding—although, as we shall see, it is this very helplessness of the system before the technological onslaught that holds out the most important promise for the long-term remaking of capitalism itself.

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Our next concern lies with the reach and inhibitions of what we might call the *capitalist imagination*.

The quality of this imagination is most clearly revealed if we think for a moment of the "visionary" glimpses of the future often spelled out for us by business spokesmen—a future of enormous affluence, technical marvels, widespread leisure, etc. There is, in these vistas, much that is genuinely new and rich with possibilities for material betterment. But there is also something inherent in all these visions that remains unmentioned. It is that these imagined societies of the future still depend on "workers," however well off, who work for "businessmen," however enlightened, in a system motivated and directed by the commercial impulse, however tempered or refined. A society in which there were no workers or businessmen as we understand the terms; or in which the categories of privilege had been fundamentally altered; or where the pressures of the marketplace had been replaced by some other means of assuring economic continuity—all these possibilities are absent from the capitalist imagination. More than that, they are dismissed as "utopian."

Albeit unwittingly, this is set forth all too clearly in the peroration of a recent book by Frederick R. Kappel, President of A.T.&T.:

> We are involved in one of the great ideological struggles of all times. Essentially it is a contest between two quite basic concepts. One is that men are capable of faith in ideas that lift their minds and hearts, ideas that raise their sights and give them hope, energy, and enthusiasm. Opposing this is the belief that the pursuit of material ends is all that life on this earth is about.

The words are eloquent enough, but alas, what do they reveal? Which side, ours or theirs, is the side of "ideas that lift minds and hearts," which the side that believes "the pursuit of material ends is all that life on this earth is about"? In the breathtaking ambiguity of this intended affirmation of business faith, the unseeing confusion of identities meant to be so clearly polarized, lies an all too clear exposition of the weakness that inhabits the very center of the capitalist imagination.

We cannot be sure what effect such a constricted view of the future may have on the aspirations and attitudes of most American citizens. It is likely that for the majority who are understandably concerned with their material lot, it would make no difference whatsoever. But for a not unimportant minority—I think of college youth and of the intellectual community—the absence of any transcendent secular goal is apt to present an oppressive limitation to thought and spirit. Indeed, in my opinion the present anarchic mood of youth may well be due to just such a lack of a visionary future to which to bend its hopes and efforts.

IV

Whatever the ultimate effect of this stifling at home, there is another area where the limitations of the capitalist imagination are likely to be of very great importance. This is in the contest with Communism for the guidance of future world society.

It is hardly necessary to speak of the power of Communism as a force bearing on American capitalism. Yet in appraising that force, we often fail to articulate that which is most threatening about it to ourselves as members or protagonists of the capitalist way of life. This is the presence of Communism as a viable social system that has dispensed with our institutions of privilege, and that therefore faces capitalism with the living refutation of their necessity. In this fundamental sense, Communism puts capitalism on trial before the bar of history. In this trial it matters not that Communism has its own system of privilege, in some ways more primitive than our own. Nor does it count for much that capitalist performance on many fronts is manifestly superior to that of Communism. What matters is that Communism has demonstrated the mutability and historic transiency of our particular social order, and that that social order can never again feel entirely secure in its claims to permanence and legitimacy.

I believe it is this sense of historic unease that lies behind the deep, uncritical, and often unreasoning hostility of America toward Communism. The reasons we cite for our fear and hatred—the undeniable acts of cruelty and repression, of aggression and intolerance, of intrigue and untrustworthiness—can be duplicated in many non-Communist countries: in Portugal, in Spain, in the Union of South Africa, in various Latin American dictatorships, past and present. There, however, they have never roused in us the fervor or revulsion they do when discovered in the Communist world. In part, this is no doubt because these other nations are small and weak and do not constitute centers of national power comparable to Russia or China (although hardly Cuba); in part, because they do not seek to export their particular world-views. But more deeply, especially among the conservative interests of this country, I think it is because the existence of Communism frightens American capitalism, as the existence of Protestantism once frightened the Catholic Church; or the French Revolution the English aristocracy.

The fundamental threat of Communism is not likely to decline over the next generation. Rather, it is apt to grow. In Russia, the prospect is clearly for substantial economic expansion; for the gradual improvement of the still dreary life of its people; for a continuation of its massive scientific advances; for further intellectual, and perhaps political, liberalization. For China, no such sanguine assurances can be given, but its continuing emergence as the unquestioned leader of Asia

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seems hardly likely to be reversed. In Latin America and Africa, the outlook can only be for political turmoil as the aspirations of excited masses outdistance any conceivable pace of progress. In the ensuing unrest, radical leaders are bound to emerge, and it would be a miracle if they were not inclined, to some degree, toward Communism or some kind of national collectivism.

This tendency is apt to be reinforced by the very ideological limitations of capitalism we have been concerned with. If we look to the developing nations, we find in nearly all of them a yearning, not alone for material progress, but for a great social and political, even spiritual, transformation. However millennial these hopes, however certain to be dashed, they are not to be lightly disregarded. The leaders and elites of the young nations, like those of our own youth, are looking for a model of a society that will fire them to great efforts, and it is unlikely that they will find this model in the market-based and wealth-protecting philosophy of capitalism.

All these considerations point to the very great likelihood that Communism or radical national collectivism will make substantial inroads during the coming generation or two, perhaps by conquest or subversion, but more probably by the decay of existing orders unable to handle the terrible demands of political awakening and economic reformation.

Given this grave outlook, what would be its impact on America?

We have already witnessed the initial impact in the substantial militarization of American capitalism. The so-called military-industrial complex (to which should be added "political" as an equal partner) today contributes between eight and ten per cent to the Gross National Product. In the 1960's, military expenditure has regularly exceeded the sum total of all personal income taxes, has accounted for one-fourth of all federal public works, has directly employed some 3.2 million workers in defense industries and another 1.1 million as civilian employees of the Defense Department and the services, has subsidized about one-third of all research in the United States; and not least, has come to be accepted as a normal and permanent fixture of American life by all groups, including the academic. The fact is that American capitalism is now a semi-militarized economy and will very probably become even more so during the next decade.

IN THIS dangerous situation, it is important for us to clarify the specific influence over the direction of events that can be ascribed to the business interest in society. According to Marxism —or more properly Leninism—the business structure itself inherently presses the state toward armed conflict. The fierce economic conflicts of capitalist nations prior to World War II, the long history of capitalist suppression of colonials continuing down to the present in some parts of Africa, the huge and jealously guarded interests of the United States and other capitalist nations in the oil regions of the Near East or Latin America—all make it impossible to dismiss such a picture of a belligerent capitalist imperialism. At the same time, even a cursory review of the nations initiating aggressive actions since 1945 should raise doubts as to the exclusive capitalist predisposition to war. More important, an analysis of the roots of belligerency in the more warlike capitalisms, specifically pre-war Germany or Japan, must emphasize the leading role played by purely military or lingering feudal elements, and the largely passive, although not always reluctant, part taken by capitalist groups.

On somewhat more Marxian lines, Victor Perlo has made a determination of the direct economic interest of the top American corporations in war or peace. He concludes that the economic self-interest of the biggest corporations is more or less evenly divided, with half profiting from a defense economy, and half—including such giants as General Motors and U.S. Steel—being penalized by it. Assuming that big businessmen would be motivated to oppose or support disarmament on such grounds, it is important to note that nothing like a monolithic "pro-war" economic interest can be said to exist within American capitalism.

Further, the imperialist thrust that increased both the chances and the causes of war in the late 19th century seems to be giving way to less dangerous forms of international relationship. Property interests that once had to be defended by force of arms are now protected by government insurance. International relationships that formerly allowed large capitalist enterprises to intervene directly into the economic and political life of colonial nations have been succeeded by relationships in which the independence of action of foreign companies is severely restricted. In a word, the politics of nationalism has asserted its preeminence over the economics of imperialism, with the salutary consequence of a diminution in the role of business as the active initiator of foreign economic policy.

Thus, the role of business proper in the struggle for world power does not seem intrinsically warlike. Unfortunately, that does not mean the chances for conflict are therefore small. Business is not the only power center within capitalist societies, and in America the military and the civil branches of government contain more than their share of belligerent-minded leaders who are in a position to influence foreign policy. Then, too, we must reckon with the generalized hatred of Communism among the lower and middle classes, a hatred that may originally have been implanted but that now flourishes as a self-maintaining source of aggression.

In this situation, given the reciprocal posture of the other side, it is difficult to see how a major

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conflict could be avoided, were not the consequences of all-out warfare so terrifying. On both sides, only the instinct of self-preservation—fortunately the single most powerful instinct—holds back the military-minded, the fundamentalist, the ambitious, or simply the self-righteous. As a result, the most probable outlook becomes a continuation of the military-political struggle on the scale of Korea or Vietnam. The danger is that a succession of such involvements may encourage the rise of a strict garrison state, one that is marked by an atmosphere of internal repression and external belligerence.

This grave possibility may well be the single most dangerous eventuality during the next decade or two, when the chances for Communist "take-overs" will be greatest. But the longer-term future is far from foreclosed along such lines. On both sides of the great divide, forces are at work that can lessen the intensity of hostilities. One of these is the enhanced prospect for international stabilization, once the worst is over and those nations that are going to go Communist or national-collectivist have done so. A second hopeful possibility is the growth of a greater degree of isolationism in American politics—or perhaps one should say a lesser degree of interventionism—compounded in part of disillusion, in part of fear, and in part of a more realistic appreciation of our inability to affect the unruly tides of world history. Yet another force for peaceful accommodation is the possibility that the specter of Communist "world domination" will be dispelled by the sight of Communist nations in intense rivalry, just as the Communist world may be relieved by the continuing evidence of inter-capitalist frictions.

And finally, we can hope that within a generation or so, new concerns posed by enormous world populations, interlocked global technical devices for communications, transport, power, and other uses, vanishing fossil fuel supplies, a worldwide polluted atmosphere, etc., will cause the present ideological fervor to subside under more pressing problems, just as did the great religious animosities of the past.

Not all the preconditions for such a turn of events lie in our own hands. Much depends on the continuation of the present trend toward the fragmentation and gradual liberalization of the Communist world. But given this opportunity, there seems at least a reasonable chance that American and European capitalism can find a *modus vivendi* with the other side. There again, I believe, the critical determination of direction is apt to reside with the new elites rising within capitalism. Indeed, if there are limits to the adaptability of capitalism before the untoward development of world events, these limits appear to reside, more than is the case with the other challenges before the system, in the quality of the "new men" who are rising to positions of power within it.

V

IT IS TIME to revert to the question we set ourselves at the outset. What limits, we asked, were inherent in the capitalist system as such? The answer at which we have arrived is necessarily of a speculative nature. Yet, it does not appear entirely fanciful. What seems possible is to bring about social change that stops short of a direct assault on the economic machinery of privilege that all elites—indeed, that even the general public—in a capitalist society are normally eager to protect. This enables us to draw the general boundaries of short-term evolution for capitalism. The distribution of wealth can be corrected at the bottom, albeit slowly, but not at the top. The control over output can be improved very greatly but the essential commercial character of a market system, with its surrender to the acquisitive impulse, is incorrigible. A considerable accommodation can be made with the non-capitalist world, but the imagination of that world cannot be captured by a basically conservative outlook. There are, in a word, deep-seated attributes to the quality of life that constitute an impregnable inner keep of the system of American capitalism as we know it.

And yet, if we now recall our earlier concern with feudalism, we will recall that despite the seeming impregnability of its institutions in the 13th century, by the 18th century, somehow, the system had nonetheless changed out of all recognition. How did feudalism expire? It gave way to capitalism as part of a subversive process of historic change in which a newly-emerging attribute of daily life proved to be as irresistibly attractive to the privileged orders of feudalism as it was to be ultimately destructive of them. This subversive influence was the gradual infiltration of commercial relationships and cash exchanges into the everyday round of feudal life, each act of marketing binding men more fully into the cash nexus and weakening by that degree the traditional duties and relationships on which feudalism was based. Against this progressive monetization the old order struggled in vain, for the temptations and pleasures of the cash economy were greater than the erosion of privileges that went with it.

Could there be in our day an equivalent of that powerfully disintegrative and yet constitutive force—a force sufficiently overwhelming to render impotent the citadel of capitalism, and yet as irresistibly attractive to it as the earlier current of change was to feudalism? I think there is such a force, and that it already bulks very large within our world. This revolutionary power is the veritable explosion of organized knowledge, and its applied counterpart, scientific technology.

THE extraordinary rate of expansion of this explosion is sufficiently familiar to require

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only a word of exposition. There is, for instance, the often-quoted but still astonishing statement that of all the scientists who have ever lived in all of history, half are alive today. There is the equally startling calculation that the volume of scientific publication during the last ten to fifteen years is as large as, or larger than, that of all previous ages. Such examples serve accurately enough to convey the notion of the exponential growth of scientific inquiry in our day. As to the equally phenomenal growth of the powers of the technology, if that needs any demonstration, there is the contrast cited by Kenneth Boulding between the centuries needed to recuperate from the physical destruction that accompanied the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the scant twenty years in which the shattered and burned cities of modern Europe and Japan were rebuilt after the Second World War.

This explosion of science and technology is often thought of as a product *of* capitalism, insofar as it arose in an age dominated by capitalism. Yet the association was far more one of coexistence than of causal interrelation. At best we can say that the secular air of bourgeois culture was compatible with, perhaps even conducive to, scientific investigation, but we can hardly credit the acceleration of scientific activities around the middle of the 19th century to the direct stimulus or patronage of capitalism itself.

Even scientific technology exhibits but little debt to the existence of capitalism. The technology on which capitalism began its long course of growth was strictly of a pragmatic, intuitive, pre-scientific kind. Watt, for example, invented the steam engine over fifty years before the basic formulation of the law of thermodynamics. The English textile, iron and steel, or chemical industries were founded and prospered with no "scientific" underpinnings at all. The same is true for the young railroad industry, for canal building, or road-laying. The deliberate employment of scientific investigation to create or refine the technology of production was considerably delayed in arriving. In this country the first private industrial laboratory was not built until 1900 by the General Electric company, and organized research and development on a large scale did not really get under way until 1913.

Thus, we find the flowering of science and the application of science to technology—the very hallmarks of the modern era—to be currents that arose *within* capitalism, but that do not owe their existence directly to capitalism. Rather, science and its technology emerge as a great underground river whose tortuous course has finally reached the surface during the age of capitalism, but which springs from far distant sources. Having now surfaced, that river must cut its own channels through the existing social landscape. Indeed, if we ask what force in our day might in time be strong enough to undercut the bastions of privilege of capitalism and to create its own institutions and social structures in their place, the answer must surely be the one force that dominates our age—the power of science and of scientific technology.

THERE IS, I suspect, little to argue about as to the commanding pressure of science in modern times. What is likely to be a good deal less readily accepted, however, is the contention that this force will cause drastic modifications in, or even the eventual supersession of, capitalism. For at first glance this new current of history seems to have imparted an immense momentum to capitalism by providing it with a virtually inexhaustible source of invention and innovation to insure its economic growth. Merely to review in our minds the broad areas of investment and economic output that owe their existence *entirely* to the laboratory work of the last three decades—the nuclear and space establishments, electronics, the computerization of industry, the creation of new materials such as plastics—is to reveal the breadth of this new gulf stream of economic nourishment.

Yet, like the attractions of the cash market for the feudal lord, the near-term advantages of science and technology conceal long-term conflicts and incompatibilities between this new force of history and its host society. Indeed, the insinuation of science and technology into the interstices of business enterprise promises to alter the fundamental working arrangements of capitalism.

At least one of these alterations is already familiar to us. This is the tendency of technology to create social problems that require public controls to correct or forestall. In part, these agencies of control are contained and concealed *within* the centers of production themselves, where they show up as rising echelons of corporate administration and supervision. In part, the controls show up in the familiar bureaus of government that cope, with greater or lesser success, with the social repercussions of transportation, nuclear energy, drugs, air pollution, etc. In still a different aspect, the controls invade areas of social life rather than production, as in the astonishing network of government required solely to manage the automobile (an effort that requires the labor of one out of every ten persons employed by all state and local governments). Meanwhile, in the background of the social system the controls are manifest as the growing apparatus of regulation over wages and prices, and over the total flow of economic activity —all ultimately traceable to the need to intervene more closely into an economy of increasing technological disruption.

Not that the disruptive effect of technology is itself a new phenomenon. The dislocations of the technology of the pre-scientific age—say the spinning jenny—were quite as great as those of the modern age. The difference is that in an earlier age the repair of technological disturbances was

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largely consigned to the adaptive powers of the individual and his family, to the ameliorative efforts of small-scale local government, and to the annealing powers of the market itself. Today, however, these traditional agencies of social repair can no longer cope effectively with the entrance of technology. The individual, now typically a member of a small urban family rather than of a large extended rural family, is much less capable of withstanding economic displacement without external assistance. The local community, faced with large-scale problems of unemployment or ecological maladjustment brought about by technical change, has no recourse but to turn to the financial help and expertise available only from larger government units. The market, which no longer "clears" when the marketers are enormous firms rather than atomistic business units, also discovers that the only antidote to grave economic disjunction is the countervailing influence or *force majeur* of the central governing authority. In a word, technology seems to be exerting a steady push from many levels and areas of the economy in the direction of a society of *organization*.

To this well-known effect of technical progress we must now add another—the capacity of technology to render redundant the physical energies of man. That is, machines do man's work for him, thereby freeing him from the bonds of toil and, not less important in the context of our inquiry, from the hegemony of the market process.

We see this disemployment effect most dramatically in the case of agriculture. But equally startling is the labor-displacing effect of modern technology in that congeries of activities associated with the extraction of basic materials from nature and their fabrication, assembly, conversion, or transport to point of sale. Since 1900, science and technology have given us a stupendous array of new products, each requiring large quantities of human effort—the automobile, the whole range of consumer durables, the communications industry, office machinery, new metals, fabrics, and materials of all kinds, to name but a few. Yet at the end of that period, the total requirements on the labor force for all these goods-centered industries had risen by only *two percentage points*. During the era of the greatest increase in factory production ever known, virtually no increase in the distribution of labor in favor of the goods sector was needed—indeed, since the hours of work fell, there was actually a *relatively decreased* need for human effort in the output of these goods.

TODAY WE stand at the threshhold of a new stage in the application of scientific technology to human activities: automation. What is most threatening about this technology is that it has begun to invade a sanctuary of hitherto relatively unmechanized work—the vast numbers of jobs in the office, administrative, and service occupations. By 1960, more than half the labor force was in these jobs. And now, into this varied group of occupations, technology is starting to penetrate in the form of machines as complex as those that can read and sort checks, or as relatively simple as those that dispense coffee and sandwiches.

This is not to maintain that no new areas of employment exist. Certainly there remain very large and still untapped possibilities for work in the reconstruction of the cities; the provision of education; the improvement of health and recreation facilities; the counseling of the young and the care of the aged; the beautification of the environment. Provided only that demand can be marshaled for these activities, there is surely no dearth of job prospects for the coming generation.

But that is precisely the point. The incursion of technology has pushed the frontiers of work into a spectrum of jobs whose common denominator is that they require *public action and public funds* for their initiation and support. The employment-upsetting characteristics of technology thus act to speed capitalism along the general path of planning and control down which it is simultaneously impelled by the direct environment-upsetting impact of technological change.

If we look further ahead, the necessity for planning is apt to become still more pressing. The day of a "fully automated" society is by no means a fantasy, although its realization may well require another century, or more. That is to say, we can, without too much difficulty, imagine a time when as small a proportion of the labor force as now suffices to overprovide us with food, will serve to turn out the manufactured staples, the houses, the transportation, the retail services, even the governmental supervision that will be required.

What the leisured fraction of the population will then do with itself is an interesting and important question. It may possibly find avenues of remuneration that are resistive to mechanical duplication, so that instead of taking in one another's wash, we buy one another's paintings. But even in this best outcome, the underlying process of production, now enormously mechanized and intricately interconnected, would require some form of coordination other than the play of market forces. If we think of the network of controls over output and disposal that now characterize the agricultural sector, we catch some idea of the controls required to operate an economy where manpower requirements generally would have been reduced to a level comparable to that of farming today. And, if the leisured population does not find adequate remuneration in unmechanizable private employments, it will have to be given the direct right to share in society's output—another vital infringement on the market's function.

BUT THE erosion of the market goes deeper yet. For the introduction of technology has

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one last effect whose ultimate implications for the metamorphosis of capitalism are perhaps greatest of all. This is the effect of technology in steadily raising the average level of well-being, thereby gradually bringing to an end the condition of material need as an effective stimulus for human behavior.

Everyone recognizes that the end to want would represent the passage over an historic watershed for mankind. But it must be equally clear that such a passage will also represent a basic revision of the existential situation that has hitherto provided the main impetus for work. As needs diminish, the traditional stimuli of capitalism begin to lose their force, occupations become valued for their intrinsic pleasures rather than for their extrinsic rewards. The very decision to work or not becomes a matter of personal preference rather than of economic necessity. More telling, the drive for profit—the nuclear core of capitalist energy—becomes blunted, as the purchasable distinctions of wealth decline. In a society of the imaginable wealth implicit in another hundred years of technical progress, who will wish to be the rich man's servant at any price?

All this is no doubt a gain in human dignity. But that is not an end to it. As a result of this inestimable gain in personal freedom, a fundamental assurance for social viability also vanishes, for the market stimuli that bring about social provisioning are no longer met with obedient responses. One has but to imagine employees in an industry of central importance going on strike, not with the slim backing of unemployment insurance and a small union supplement, as today, but with liquid assets sufficient to maintain them, if need be, for a year or more, to envisage the potential for social disorder inherent in the attainment of a genuinely widespread and substantial affluence.

Yet it is precisely such an affluence that is within clear sight, provided that the impetus of science and technology continue to propel the economy for another century. In this impasse there is but one possible solution. *Some authority other than the market must be entrusted with the allocation of men to the essential posts of society, should they lack for applicants.*

WE HAVE concerned ourselves so far only with the curious two-edged effect of science and technology on the functional aspects of capitalism. Now we must pay heed to a second and perhaps even more critical effect, the conquest of the capitalist imagination by science and scientific technology.

I think it is fair to say that capitalism as an *idea* has never garnered much enthusiasm. All efforts to raise money-making to the level of a positive virtue have failed. The self-interest of the butcher and the baker to which Adam Smith appealed in lieu of their benevolence may serve as powerful sources of social energy, but not as powerful avatars of the social imagination.

By way of contrast, I think it is also fair to say that science *is* the burning idea of the 20th century, comparable in its impact on men's minds to the flush of democratic enthusiasm of the late 18th century or to the political commitment won by Communism in the early 20th. The altruism of science, its "purity," the awesome vistas it opens and the venerable path it has followed, have won from all groups exactly that passionate interest and conviction that is so egregiously lacking to capitalism as a way of life.

It is not alone that science carries a near-religious ethos of conviction and even sacrifice. Within Communism as within capitalism, the new elites arising within the framework of the old society owe their ascendancy and their allegiance in large part to science. The scientific cadres proper, the social scientists, the government administrative personnel—even the military—look to science not merely as the vehicle of their expertise, but as the magnetic North of their compass of values. These new elites have not as yet divorced their social goals from those of the society to which they are still glad to pay allegiance, and no more than the 13th-century merchants huddled under the walls of a castle, do they see themselves as the potential architects and lords of a society built around their own functions. But as with the merchants, we can expect that such notions will in time emerge and assert their primacy over the aims of the existing order.

What sorts of notions are these apt to be?

One general direction of thought will surely be the primacy of scientific discovery as a central purpose of society, a *raison d'être* for its existence, perhaps even a vehicle for its religious impulses. No doubt the distribution of social resources and of privileges will reflect this basic orientation toward scientific exploration and application. Not less characteristic will be an emphasis on rational solutions to social problems. The key word of the new society is apt to be *control*. Not alone economic affairs (which should become of secondary importance), but the numbers and location of the population and its genetic quality, the manner of social domestication of children, the choice of life-work—even the very duration of life itself—are all apt to become subjects for scientific investigation and direction.

It is tempting, but idle, to venture beyond these few suggestions. What manner of life, what institutions, what ideologies may serve the purposes of a society dedicated to the accumulation of scientific knowledge and power, we cannot foretell; variations may well be as great as those observable in societies dedicated to the accumulation of material wealth. Nor does there seem to be much point in attempting to foresee by what precise stratagems the elites and ideas of the future may finally assert their claims. Historic projection

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is rarely, if ever, a matter of simple extrapolation from the present and recent past. Should there arise radical parties in America, broadly-based and aimed at a rational reorganization of economic affairs, the pace of transition would be quicker. Should there not, change will still occur, but more slowly. Veblen was too impatient for his engineers to take over; Schumpeter, more realistic when he advised the intelligentsia to be prepared to wait in the wings for possibly a century, a "short run" in affairs of this kind, he said.

So, too, the examples of the past discourage us from attempting to prophesy the manner of demise of the system to be superseded. The new protagonists of social and economic control will lack for some time an articulate conception of a purposively constituted and consciously directed social system. The old ideas of the proper primacy of economic aims will linger side-by-side with newer ideas of the priority of scientific interests. And no doubt the privileges of the older order will endure side-by-side with those of the new, just as titles of nobility exist to this very day. It is conceivable that violence may attend the transfer of power and responsibility from one elite to another, but more probably the transfer will be imperceptible; managed by the sons of the old elite entering the profession of the new.

ALL THESE are the merest speculations, difficult to avoid entirely, not to be taken too literally. Only one thing is certain. It is the profound incompatibility between the new idea of the active use of science within society and the idea of capitalism.

The conflict lies in the ideas that ultimately inform both worlds. The world of science as it is applied to society is committed to the idea of man as a being who shapes his collective destiny; the world of capitalism to an idea of man as one who permits his common social destination to take care of itself. The essential idea of a society built on scientific engineering is to impose human will on the social universe; that of capitalism to allow the social universe to unfold as if it were beyond human interference.

Before the activist philosophy of science as a social instrument, this inherent social passivity of capitalism becomes archaic, and eventually intolerable. The "self-regulating" economy that is its highest social achievement stands condemned by its absence of meaning and intelligence, and each small step taken to correct its deficiencies only advertises the inhibitions placed on the potential exercise of purposeful thought and action by its remaining barriers of ideology and privilege. In the end, capitalism is weighed in the scale of science and found wanting, not alone as a system but as a philosophy.

That an ascendant science, impatient to substitute reason for blind obedience, inquiry for ideology, represents a great step forward for mankind, I do not doubt. Yet it seems necessary to end on a cautionary note. Just as the prescient medievalist might have foreseen in capitalism the possibilities for the deformation of human life as well as for its immense improvement, so the approaching world of scientific predominance has its darker side. There lurks a dangerous collectivist tinge in the prospect of controls designed for the enlargement of man but inherently capable of his confinement as well. But beyond that, there is, in the vista of a scientific quest grimly pursued for its own sake, a chilling reminder of a world where economic gains are relentlessly pursued for their own sake. Science is a majestic driving force from which to draw social energy and inspiration, but its very impersonality, its "value-free" criteria, may make its tutelary elites as remote and unconcerned as the principles in whose name they govern.

Against these cold and depersonalizing tendencies of a scientifically organized world, humanity will have to struggle in the future, as it has had to contend against not dissimilar excesses of economic involvement in this painful—but also liberating—stage of human development. Thus, if the dawn of an age of science opens larger possibilities for mankind than it has enjoyed heretofore, it does not yet promise a society in which the overriding aim of mankind will be the cultivation and enrichment of all human beings, in all their diversity, complexity, and profundity. That is the struggle for the very distant future, which must be begun, nonetheless, today.

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ALFRED KAZIN

THE JEW AS MODERN WRITER

EMMA Lazarus, who wrote those lines inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty ("Give me your tired, your poor . . . Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free"), was the first Jew whom Ralph Waldo Emerson ever met. Emerson's daughter, Ellen, an old Sunday School teacher, noted how astonishing it was "to get at a real unconverted Jew (who had no objections to calling herself one, and talked freely about 'our Church' and 'we Jews'), and to hear how Old Testament sounds to her, and find she has been brought up to keep the Law, and the Feast of the Passover, and the day of Atonement. The interior view was more interesting than I could have imagined. She says her family are outlawed now, they no longer keep the Law but Christian institutions don't interest her either."

Emma Lazarus had been sending Emerson her poems for years; he responded with uncertain praise, for they were excessively literary and understandably raised questions in the mind of so subtle a critic. But although she was not to become a consciously "Jewish" poet until the Russian pogroms aroused her, her being a Jew had certainly distinguished her in the literary world of Victorian America. She was that still exotic figure, that object of Christian curiosity, "the Jew"—and to descendants of the New England Puritans, straight out of their Bible.

Proust was to say that in every Jew "there is a prophet and a bounder." Emma Lazarus was still the "prophet" when she visited Concord. This was in 1876, when Jews in this country were getting known as "bounders." General Grant in a Civil War order had said "Jew" when he meant peddler, but impoverished farmers in the West now said "Jew" when they meant Wall Street financier. New England writers like James Russell Lowell and Henry Adams became obsessed with Jews and "the Jewish question" as soon as there were real Jews on the American scene. The "prophet" figure that literary New England had always known from books had become the "bounder"—and worse, the ragged *shtetl* Jew whom Adams examined with such loathing from a Russian railway car and in New York when he heard him speaking "a weird guttural Yiddish." Henry James, returning to his native downtown streets, announced that "the denizens of the New York Ghetto, heaped as thick as the splinters on the table of a glass-blower, had each, like the fine glass particle, his or her individual share of the whole hard glitter of Israel." The Jew in New York was an instance of alienness, an object to be studied. James would have been astonished to think of a writer coming out of this milieu. And to do him justice, not many immigrant Jews saw themselves as writers in English. Henry Adams's sometime protégé, Bernard Berenson, who had come here from Lithuania, was to find himself only as an art historian in Italy.

WILLIAM Dean Howells, now a socialist in New York, praised Abraham Cahan's *Yekl, A Tale Of The New York Ghetto*. But Howells was predisposed to Russian literature, Cahan was a "Russian" realist in English, and Howells, like so many Westerners enjoying or soon to enjoy New York's "Europeanness," was also a democratic idealist, naturally friendly to all these new peoples in New York. His friend Mark Twain said that Jews were members of the human race: "that is the worst you can say about them." But this easy Western humor was still very far from the creative equality that Jewish and non-Jewish writers were some day to feel. Mark Twain, like Maxim Gorky in Russia, protested against pogroms and was friendly to Jews; but as late as 1910, when he died, there was no significant type of the Jewish writer in this country. The older German-Jewish stock had produced many important scholars and publicists; it was to produce an original in Gertrude Stein. But the positive, creative role of the Jew as modern American, and above all as a modern American writer, was in the first years of this century being prepared not in the universities, not even in journalism, but in the vaudeville theaters, music halls, and burlesque houses where the pent-up eagerness of penniless immigrant youngsters met the raw urban scene on its own terms. It was not George Jean Nathan, Robert Nathan, or Ludwig Lewisohn, any more than it was Arthur

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ALFRED KAZIN's latest book is *Starting Out in the Thirties*. A somewhat different version of the present piece will serve as the introduction to a 20-year selection of articles and stories from COMMENTARY, which is to be published by Atheneum in the spring under the title *The Commentary Reader*.

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Krock, David Lawrence, Adolph Ochs, or Walter Lippmann who established the Jew in the national consciousness as a distinctly American figure; it was the Marx Brothers, Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, Fannie Brice, George Gershwin. Jewish clowns, minstrels, songwriters helped to fit the Jew to America, and America to the Jew, with an *élan* that made for future creativity in literature as well as for the mass products of the "entertainment industry."

Proust, with his artist's disengagement from both "prophet" and "bounder"; Henry Adams, with his frivolous hatred of the immigrant ("five hundred thousand Jews in New York eating kosher, and saved from the drowning they deserve"), had never conceived of the Jew as a representative national entertainer. But in the naturalness and ease with which the Jewish vaudevillian put on blackface, used stereotypes, and ground out popular songs, in the avidity with which the public welcomed him, was the Jew's share in the common experience, the Jew's averageness and typicality, that were to make possible the Jew-as-writer in this country. In Western Europe, Jewish "notables" had been a handful—as odd as the occasional prime minister of Italy or Britain; in Eastern Europe, where the Jews were a mass, it was their very numbers that was so disturbing to anti-Semites in office, who even in Soviet Russia were to keep Jews down because the thought of too many Jews being allowed to exercise their talents at once could obviously be viewed as a threat to their own people. As Mikoyan was to say (some years ago) to a Jewish delegation, "We have our own cadres now." But in this country, the very poverty and cultural rawness of the Jewish immigrant masses, the self-assertive egalitarianism of the general temper, and the naturalness with which different peoples could identify with each other in the unique half-way house that was New York (without New York it would no doubt all have been different, but without New York there would have been no immigrant epic, no America), gave individual performers the privilege of representing the popular mind. Never before had so numerous a mass of Jews been free citizens of the country in which they lived, and so close to the national life. And although many a genteel young literatus now analyzing Nathanael West and Saul Bellow shudders at his connection with Potash and Perlmutter, Eddie Cantor and Fannie Brice, it is a fact that this "vulgar culture," proceeding merrily to the irreverent genius of the Marx Brothers (whose best movies were written by S. J. Perelman, the college chum and brother-in-law of Nathanael West), helped to found, as a natural habitat for the Jews in this country, the consciously grotesque style of parody that one finds in Perelman, West, Odets, Bellow, in many Broadway-Hollywood satirists, and even in an occasional literary critic, like Isaac Rosenfeld and Harold Rosenberg, impatient with the judicial tone that comes with the office. The Jewish writer, a late arrival in this country and admittedly of uncertain status, had to find his model in the majority culture, and although this had some depressing consequences in the mass, it was on the whole fortunate, for the sharply independent novelists, poets, and critics to come, that they were influenced more by the language of the street than by the stilted moralism that has always been a trap for the Jewish writer.

But of course the popular culture was invigorating and even liberating so long as it was one of many cultures operating simultaneously on the Jewish writer's mind. Ever since the legal emancipation of the Jews in Western Europe, there had been two principal cultures among the Jews—the orthodox, religious tradition, pursuing its own way often magnificently indifferent to the issues shaking European thought; and the newly secularistic culture of the "Jewish intellectuals," who found in the cause of "progressive humanity," in philosophic rationalism, in socialism, and cultural humanism, their sophisticated equivalent of Judaism. In Western Europe, for the most part, these two cultures no longer irritated each other. But among the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern Europe, "enlightenment" did not appear until late in the 19th century; while in Western Europe the medieval ghettos were a barely tolerated memory, in Russia the Jewish Pale of Settlement, restricting most Jews to certain areas and restricting the intensity of their existence to the *shtetl* and its religious customs, remained a searing memory in the lives of immigrants and their children. The "dark" ages and the "modern" age, the ghetto and the revolutionary movement, persecution and free human development, were conjoined in the Jewish mind. The tension and ardor with which the two cultures of modern Jewry were related, in individual after individual, helps to explain the sudden flowering of painters among Russian Jews in the first years of this century, the extraordinary spiritual energy invested in the idea of socialism, the "twist" that Isaac Babel liked to give his Russian sentences, the general passion for "culture" and "cultural advancement," the revolutionary zeal with which former yeshiva boys turned political commissars spoke of the great new age of man.

Babel wrote of ex-seminarists riding away with the Red Cavalry from their "rotted" Bibles and Talmuds; Chagall's *rebbes* sprouted wings over the thatched roofs of Vitebsk and sang the joys of the flesh. The force of some immense personal transformation could be seen in the conscious energy of Trotsky's public role in the Russian Revolution. These revolutionaries, writers, scientists, painters were the "new men," the first mass secularists in the long religious history of the Jews, yet the zeal with which they engaged themselves to the "historic" task of desacralizing the European

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tradition often came from the profound history embedded in Judaism itself—it certainly did not come from the experience of Jews with other peoples in Eastern Europe. These "new men" had a vision of history that, as their critics were to tell them, was fanatically all of one piece, obstinately "Jewish" and "intellectual"—a vision in which some subtle purposiveness to history always managed to reassert itself in the face of repeated horrors. But what their critics could not recognize was that this obstinate quest for "meaning" was less a matter of conscious thought than a personal necessity, a requirement of survival, the historic circumstance that reasserted itself in case after case among the Jews, many of whom had good reason to believe that their lives were a triumph over every possible negation, and who, with the modesty of people for whom life itself is understandably the greatest good, found it easy to rejoice in the political and philosophic reasoning that assured them civic respect, civic peace, and the life of the mind.

"Excess of sorrow laughs," wrote Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. "Excess of joy weeps." For Jews in this country, who had triumphed over so much, remembered so much, were in such passionate relations with the two cultures—of religion and "modernity" that many believed in simultaneously—their conscious progress often became something legendary, a drama rooted in the existential fierceness of life lived and barely redeemed every single day. There was an intensity, a closeness to many conflicting emotions, that often seemed unaccountably excessive to other peoples. The need to explain himself to himself, to put his own house in order, was a basic drive behind many a Jewish writer. People to whom existence has often been a consciously fearful matter, who have lived at the crossroads between the cultures and on the threshold between life and death, naturally see existence as tension, issue, and drama, woven out of so many contradictions that only a work of art may appear to *hold* these conflicts, to compose them, to allow the human will some detachment. Surely never in history has a whole people had to endure such a purgation of emotions as took place at the Eichmann trial. It was this that led Harold Rosenberg to show the cruel dramatic necessity behind the trial—the need of the Jews to tell their story, to relive the unbearable, the inadmissible, the inexpressible. The Jew who has lived through the age of Hitler cannot even say, with Eliot, "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" For he has to live with his knowledge if he is to live at all, and this "knowledge" enforces itself upon him as a fact both atrocious and dramatic, a mockery of the self-righteous Christianity that has always surrounded him, a parody of the Orthodox Judaism that has sought to justify the ways of God to man, a drama founded on the contrast between the victims and all those who remained spectators when the Jews were being slaughtered.

There are experiences so extreme that, after living them, one can do nothing with them *but* put them into words. There are experiences so terrible that one can finally do nothing with them but not forget them. This was already the case with many of the young Jewish writers just out of the city ghettos, who began to emerge in significant numbers only in the early 30's. Looking back on this emergence, one can see that it needed the peculiar crystallization of ancient experiences, then the avidity with which young writers threw themselves on the American scene, to make possible that awareness of the Jew as a new force that one sees in such works of the 30's as Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money*, Daniel Fuchs's *Summer in Williamsburg*, Albert Halper's *The Chute*, Odets's *Awake and Sing*, Meyer Levin's *The Old Bunch*, and even in West's *Miss Lonelyhearts*, whose hero is not named a Jew but who is haunted by the indiscriminate pity that was to mark the heroes of Bernard Malamud and Edward Wallant. In the 20's, several extraordinarily sensitive writers, notably Paul Rosenfeld and Waldo Frank, had emerged out of the older German-Jewish stock; but on the whole, it needed the turbulent mixing of the ghetto and the depression to make possible the wild flurry of strong new novels and plays in the 30's.

Yet the social realists of the 30's were often boxed in, mentally, by the poverty and hopelessness of their upbringing and the bitterness, deprivations, and anti-Semitism of depression America. The extraordinary brevity of so many literary careers in America is a social fact that any account of the Jewish writer in America must contend with as an omen for the future. Although the aborted career is common enough in American writing and was particularly marked among writers of the 30's—many were shipwrecked by the failure of their political hopes, and many crippled as artists by the excessive effort it took to bring out their non-selling books—it is also a fact that writers from the "minorities" have a harder time getting started, and tend, as a group, to fade out more easily, than those writers from the older stocks whose literary culture was less deliberately won and is less self-conscious. A historian of the Negro novel in this country says that most Negroes who have published one book have never published another—and one might well wonder what, until the sudden fame of James Baldwin, would have induced any Negro writer in this country to keep at it except the necessity of telling his own story. Thinking of the family situation portrayed in *Call It Sleep*, one can see why, having written *that* up, to the vast indifference of the public in the 30's, the author should have felt that he was through. The real drama behind most Jewish novels and plays, even when they are topical and revolutionary in feeling, is the contrast between the hysterical ten-

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derness of the Oedipal relation and the "world"; in the beginning there was the Jewish mother and her son, but the son grew up, he went out into the world, he became a writer. That was the beginning of his career, and usually the end of the novel. Jews don't believe in original sin, but they certainly believe in the original love that they once knew in the *shtetl*, in the kitchen, in the Jewish household—and after *that* knowledge, what forgiveness? In this, at least, the sentimental author of *Jews Without Money* parallels the master of childhood in *Call It Sleep*.

WHAT SAVED Jewish writing in America from its innate provincialism, what enabled it to survive the moral wreckage of the 30's, was the coming of the "intellectuals"—writers like Delmore Schwartz, Saul Bellow, Lionel Trilling, Karl Shapiro, Harold Rosenberg, Isaac Rosenfeld, Lionel Abel, Clement Greenberg, Bernard Malamud, Irving Howe, Philip Rahv, Leslie Fiedler, Robert Warshow, Paul Goodman, Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, William Phillips. It was these and younger writers in their tradition who made possible intellectual reviews like *Partisan Review* and serious, objective, unparochial magazines like COMMENTARY—a magazine which has emphasized general issues and regularly included so many writers who are not Jews. COMMENTARY, founded in November 1945, was hospitable to this new maturity and sophistication among Jewish writers in America; it established itself on the American scene easily, and with great naturalness, exactly in those years immediately after the war when American Jews began to publish imaginative works and intellectual studies of distinction—*Dangling Man, The Victim, The Middle of the Journey, The Liberal Imagination, Death of a Salesman, The Naked and the Dead, The World is a Wedding, The Lonely Crowd, The Natural, The Adventures of Augie March, The Mirror and the Lamp, The Tradition of the New.*

Even a gifted writer outside this group, Salinger, contemptuous of its ideologies, was an "intellectual" writing about "intellectuals." Even a middlebrow sullenly critical of its preoccupations, Herman Wouk, did it the honor of "exposing" an intellectual in *The Caine Mutiny*. Whether they were novelists or just intellectual pundits at large, what these writers all had in common was the ascendancy of "modern literature," which has been more destructive of bourgeois standards than Marxism, was naturally international-minded, and in a culture bored with middle-class rhetoric, upheld the primacy of intelligence and the freedom of the imagination. The heroes of these "intellectuals" were always Marx, Freud, Trotsky, Eliot, Joyce, Valéry; the "intellectuals" believed in the "great enlighteners," because their greatest freedom was to be enlighteners of all culture themselves, to be the instructors and illuminati of the modern spirit. Unlike so many earlier writers, who had only their hard story to tell, and then departed, the Jewish "intellectuals" who emerged in the 40's found shelter under the wide wings of the "modern movement," and so showed an intellectual spirit that Jews had not always managed in the great world.

Of course the prosperity that began with the war encouraged the new writers to feel that the country was theirs. Immediately after the war, indeed, some of them embraced this new-found land, their America, with an enthusiam made slightly hysterical by the need to cast off Marxist ideology. Yet this new liveliness could be attributed in the greatest part to the closing up of a time lag, to the sudden eruption of writers whose time had come—and who had often been brought up in old-fashioned ways that impressed the dizzyingly complex new world upon their minds with special vividness.

Sartre says in *Les Mots* of the grandfather who brought him up—"Between the first Russian Revolution and the first World War, fifteen years after Mallarmé's death . . . a man of the 19th century was foisting upon his grandson ideas that had been current under Louis Philippe. . . . Ought I to complain? . . . In our bustling societies, delays sometimes give a head start." Many a Jewish writer has been brought up on his grandfather's ideas, and now engages the last third of the 20th century with special eagerness. Generally speaking, the Jewish intellectuals who since the 40's have exercised so much influence on American culture started very far back. If the young man from the provinces, as Lionel Trilling named him, typifies the encounter with the great world in 19th-century novels, it was significantly the Jewish intellectual who was now to write the key book on Matthew Arnold, the definitive biographies of Henry Adams, Henry James, James Joyce, who was to become the theoretician of action painting, the most resourceful American novelist of the postwar period, the editor of the leading cultural review, the Reichian *enfant terrible* of the universities, the novelist of orgiastic high life in Palm Springs, Las Vegas, Hollywood, and the Waldorf Towers. Often enough, graduates of the old revolutionary movement, with its intellectual ardor, its internationalism, its passion for political complexities, and its taste for action, these Jewish intellectuals combined an American belief in the "tradition of the new" with their own moral tradition and their passion for the Europe of the great thinkers, their driving personal ambition with the knowledge that they were exceptions, "survivors," as Moses Elkanah Herzog said, of the age that had seen their brethren slaughtered like cattle in the abattoirs that the Nazis had made of Eastern Europe. Just as it was Southern writers, with their knowledge of defeat and their instinctive irony, who in the 40's spoke to the chastened American mind, so it is Jewish writers who now represent to many Americans the unreality of

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their prosperity and the anxiety of their condition. In situations of inestimable complexity, requiring the most "sophisticated" and "expert" "analysis" of the "complex factors," it was often enough Jews, born and pushed to be intellectuals, who became the connoisseurs of the new chaos, the mental elite of the power age. Never was interpretation, explanation, commentary, a vital new *midrash*, so much needed as in the period, starting with the war, when the world was so much compressed and subtilized by the new technological revolution—and never were there so many Jewish intellectuals prepared to do the explaining. The ragged old "prophet" was not much in evidence, and the Jew-as-bounder was not to be thought of, but the age of the intellectuals was in full swing.

All the writers were intellectuals now, the best writers as well as the most conformist—novelists like Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer dealt in the drama of concepts, had heroes who lived by concepts and suffered for them. The world seemed suspended on concepts, and in the mass magazines as in the universities and publishing houses a mass of indistinguishable sophisticates genuflected to the same modern idols and talked the same textbook formulae about Joyce, James, Eliot, Faulkner, Picasso, Stravinsky. The Sunday book supplements were soon all as apocalyptic as a Jewish novelist after a divorce, and one could regularly read footnotes to the absurdity of the human condition, the death of tragedy, and the end of innocence by pseudo-serious minds who imitated Bellow, Mailer, Fiedler, Ginsberg, Goodman as humorlessly as teen-age girls copied hair styles from the magazines.

DEFINITELY, it was now the thing to be Jewish. But in Western universities and small towns many a traditional novelist and professor of English felt out of it, and asked, with varying degrees of self-control, if there was no longer a good novel to be written about the frontier, about Main Street, about the good that was in marriage? Was it possible, these critics wondered aloud, that American life had become so de-regionalized and lacking in local color that the big power units and the big cities had preempted the American scene, along with the supple Jewish intellectuals who were at home with them? Was it possible that Norman Mailer had become the representative American novelist?

It was entirely possible, and certainly the thought would not have astonished Mailer, just as the power of his example for other novelists did not astonish Saul Bellow. Whatever pain this ascendancy might cause to writers who felt out of it because they lived in Montana, or in the wrong part of California, it was a fact that there were now Jewish novelists who, as writers, had mastered the complex resources of the modern novel, who wrote English lovingly, possessively, masterfully, for whom the language and the form, the intelligence of art, had become as natural a way of living as the Law had been to their grandfathers. Literature had indeed become their spiritual world, their essential personal salvation, in a world where all traditional markers were fast disappearing. But in the frothy turbulent "mix" of America in the 60's, with its glut, its power drives, its confusion of values, the Jewish writer found himself so much read, consulted, imitated, that he knew it would not be long before the reaction set in—and in fact the decorous plaint of the "Protestant minority" has been succeeded by crudely suggestive phrases about the "Jewish Establishment," the "O.K. Writers and the Poor Goy," "The Jewish-American Push." Yet it is plainly a certain success that has been resented, not the Jew. And if the Jew has put his distinct mark on modern American writing, it is surely because, in a time when the old bourgeois certainties and humanist illusions have crumbled, the Jew is practiced in what James called "the imagination of disaster," and "does indeed see life as ferocious and sinister." The contemporary literary temper is saturnine, panicky, black in its humor but adroit in shifting the joke onto the shoulders of society. And the Jewish writer, with his natural interest in the social fact, has been particularly quick to show the lunacy and hollowness of so many present symbols of authority. Anxiety hangs like dry electricity in the atmosphere of modern American life, and the stimulus of this anxiety, with all its comic overtones, is the realized subject in the novels of Bruce Jay Friedman, Joseph Heller, Richard Stern, Jeremy Larner, the plays of Jack Gelber and Arthur Kopit. There is real madness to modern governments, modern war, modern moneymaking, advertising, science, and entertainment; this madness has been translated by many Jewish writers into the country they live in, the time that offers them everything but hope. In a time of intoxicating prosperity, it has been natural for the Jewish writer to see how superficial society can be, how pretentious, atrocious, unstable—and comic. This, in a secular age when so many people believe in nothing but society's values, is the significance to literature of the Jewish writer's being a Jew.

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Genius With Sound.

Based on accomplishment, the name of Emile Berliner should roll from our memories as easily as that of Alexander Graham Bell. For Berliner took Bell's rudimentary telephone and made it a workable, perfected device. In fact, the commercial telephone, as we know it, would be inconceivable without Emile Berliner's contribution.

His tinkering with the telephone led Berliner to invent another acoustical device. The microphone. The value of this invention becomes apparent when you realize that the radio, television and recording industries would be silenced without it.

The gramophone is another invention which testifies to Berliner's acoustical genius. The primitive forerunner of today's complex stereo systems, the gramophone developed into the Victor Talking Machine, which brought the great Caruso into the living rooms of millions.

But Berliner's inventive genius was not limited simply to sound. He, and his son, Henry, designed the three different helicopters which made successful flights from 1916 to 1926.

Public health was another of Berliner's consuming interests. Convinced that epidemics of typhoid, diphtheria and scarlet fever were largely traceable to raw milk, he worked to popularize Pasteur's theories. Thru Berliner's efforts, pasteurization received Federal endorsement in 1907.

Having had little formal education himself, Berliner ensured education for others by contributing to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Berliner also showed great interest in the rebuilding of a Jewish state in Palestine.

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JOHN SLAWSON

MUTUAL AID AND THE NEGRO

THE IDEA of self-help or mutual aid as a means to further progress in securing full equality is not, to put it mildly, popular among Negroes. As the recent White House conference on civil rights made clear, Negroes tend to have three basic objections to the idea. First of all, they see the emphasis on self-help as a diversionary tactic, either consciously or unconsciously motivated by a desire on the part of whites to shift attention from the real issue of discrimination in employment, housing, and schools, to the putative deficiencies or weaknesses of the Negro community and the Negro family. A second objection, flowing directly out of the first, is that the emphasis on self-help is only a covert way of implying that the Negro bears an important share in the responsibility for his own plight. And finally, there is the objection pointedly formulated not long ago in these pages by Bayard Rustin:*

> I would advise those who think that self-help is the answer to familiarize themselves with the long history of such efforts in the Negro community, and to consider why so many foundered on the shoals of ghetto life. . . .

Now there is no question that certain white advocates of Negro self-help—I am thinking particularly of John Fischer and Eric Hoffer—have discussed the matter in such a way as to lend substance to these objections. To say, as Mr. Fischer did, for example, that "So long as the Negro blames his plight entirely on circumstances, history and the white man, he's going to stay in that plight," is to invite a justifiably hostile response. For the truth is that prejudice is never a consequence of the actions or characteristics of the victim; it comes from the bigot himself (who, to be sure, will always rationalize his feelings by pegging them to the victim's "objectionable" traits). In any case, however, if the issue is one of distributing *blame*, then the white man does indeed deserve it, and "entirely," to use Mr. Fischer's word. But the issue, of course, is not the distribution of blame: the issue is jobs, housing, and schools. The $100-billion "freedom budget" proposed by A. Philip Randolph and the massive housing and job-training programs advocated by various civil-rights organizations are the answer to the problem of family instability among Negroes which the much-abused Moynihan Report has focused so much attention upon, just as they are the answer to the "Dull, Devastating Spiral of Failure" which the McCone Report on the Watts riots discusses at such great length. To quote Rustin again: "If Negroes suffer more than others from the problem of family instability today, it is not because they are Negro but because they are so disproportionately unemployed, underemployed, and ill-paid." So long as we have Negro ghettos, just so long will the main order of business be to break them down, with all that breaking them down implies.

Nevertheless, while crash programs directed at this objective must have priority and are a necessary condition for securing "equality as a fact and not just as a right," they are not in themselves a sufficient one. In implying that they are, Rustin and others permit themselves to lose sight, at least temporarily, of the important truth that there are things that no one can do for a man except the man himself. Mutual aid—which is to say true self-help—as Rustin rightly points out, is not the same thing as self-improvement. In the last analysis—and particularly in a period when the government is more and more supplanting private philanthropy as the main support of welfare and economic-opportunity programs—mutual aid is more valuable as a means of building a sense of community, of group solidarity and individual pride, than as a technique (which it traditionally was) for dealing with the problems of the poor. One need only look at the civil-rights movement, especially since 1954, to see what a powerful force for the creation of group pride the doing-for-oneself can be. And there is some impressive evidence to show that the relevance of such pride to the goal of integration is more direct than it may at first glance appear. Thus, reporting in his *Strangers Next Door* on a study of interracial social contact, Professor Robin Williams of Cornell writes:

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*"From Protest to Politics," COMMENTARY, February 1965.

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Respondents who manifest a militant group pride are significantly more likely to have inter-racial social contact than non-militants and, conversely, those who score high in group self-hatred clearly tend to have less contact than those who are relatively lacking in self-hatred. In other words, it is the individual who identifies positively with his racial group who is likely to have inter-racial contact.

Mutual aid, then, would seem to be inherently desirable from every point of view. Yet many Negroes, even if it is urged upon them *not* as a diversion but rather as a complementary process to programs of outside assistance, still resist the idea. Why? For an answer to this question, one could do worse than follow Rustin's advice and examine "the long history of such efforts in the Negro community"—but not only "to consider why so many foundered on the shoals of ghetto life." One must also seek to understand the effect these founderings have had on the internal condition of the Negro community today.

II

As WITH so much else, the natural human impulse for social organization and mutual help was from the earliest days of plantation life stifled among Negroes by punitive legislation. In the Caribbean slave codes (which were incorporated into American colonial law and then into state law), for example, the assembling of more than four or five slaves was forbidden except when a white person was present. Moreover, the Black Codes saw to it that a slave who shared his troubles with fellow slaves would only bring new troubles upon himself. Slavery thus largely succeeded in destroying the sense of community and of shared fate among Negroes. A white visitor in Virginia in 1856 observed that the slave master destroyed "the sympathy that unites . . . the victims of the same oppression. . . . He has but to arm the human passions against each other."

In 1776, slavery was legal in all the colonies, but by 1830 it had been abolished in the Northern states. The number of slaves grew from a half million before the Revolution to over two million in 1830. Free Negroes increased from 40,000 in 1776 to 320,000 in 1830, 57 per cent of them—surprisingly—living in the slave states. These free Negroes in the South followed a more hazardous existence than in the North, for they could more easily be returned into slavery; nevertheless, they organized themselves from the earliest days of the Republic. The Brown Fellowship Society, founded in Charleston, South Carolina in November 1790, was the first Negro mutual-aid society. But coming into being in a world of caste, it was as caste-conscious as the white slaveholders themselves: thus, membership was restricted to mulattoes and quadroons, and "black men were not eligible." The following year, however, free black Negroes in Charleston formed a society of their own called the Free Dark Men of Color. Both groups gave help to their members: relief to poor widows, educational assistance to orphans, a cemetery and burial. Both maintained clubhouses for social purposes, and both set high standards for moral conduct and social behavior—in conformity, of course, with the ideals of the white world.

In other Southern cities with substantial groups of free Negroes, similar societies came into existence: New Orleans, Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, and St. Petersburg, Florida. But after the Nat Turner insurrection of 1831, in which sixty whites were killed, a series of laws was enacted which struck the first major blow to the development of communal association among free Negroes. They were denied the right of assembly; they could not hold church services without the presence of a licensed white minister; and they were prohibited from visiting or entertaining slaves and from convening meetings of benevolent societies and other organizations. In Maryland, free Negroes could not have "lyceums, lodges, fire companies, or literary, dramatic, social, moral, or charitable societies." In many slave states, they were enjoined from engaging in certain occupations and from trading in certain commodities.

De Tocqueville shrewdly observed that "the prejudice of race appears to be stronger in the states that have abolished slavery than in those where it still exists; and nowhere is it so intolerant as in those states where servitude has never been known." Nevertheless in the North, free Negroes began early to organize mutual-aid and self-improvement societies. The very first was the Free African Society, founded in Philadelphia in 1787 by Richard Allen, a self-taught Methodist preacher who "worked out" to buy his own liberty. The society undertook to build a fund for mutual aid, to help its members look after their sick, to care for their poor widows and educate their orphans, and to bury their dead. It adopted resolutions to strengthen marriage bonds and familial responsibility, and it provided for the suspension of members guilty of drunkenness or disorderly conduct.

Although mutual-aid and church groups also came into being among free Negroes in other Northern cities (Boston in 1796, and New York in 1808), it was in Philadelphia that an organized free Negro community had its most impressive unfolding. Philadelphia, in the early decades of the 19th century, benefited from the presence of a group of Negroes with exceptional gifts of leadership, some of whose families had enjoyed several generations of freedom—a wealthy industrialist, a bishop, an editor and publisher, an orator. They were a unique elite among free Negroes, and together they stimulated and set in motion a variety of Negro associations and activities rang-

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ing from temperance societies and relief work to anti-slavery conventions. Their activities, though on a more modest scale, bring to mind the communal and philanthropic efforts of the acculturated German Jews in America at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries on behalf of the East-European Jewish immigrants then streaming into the United States.

ACCORDING TO W. E. B. Du Bois's pioneering sociological study, *The Philadelphia Negro*, (published in 1889), about 7,000 Philadelphia Negroes were members of a hundred mutual-aid societies in 1838; ten years later these societies claimed about 8,000 members. (The figures seem inflated; the 1850 census reported 10,700 free Negroes in Philadelphia, but even so, free Negroes in Philadelphia had an impressive record of communal associations.)

Philadelphia, too, was where the Negro Convention Movement started in 1830. Organized first to protest Ohio's renewed rigid enforcement of an old fugitive slave law (as a consequence, about a thousand Negroes migrated from Ohio to Canada), the movement developed on a national scale and in many free states, combining abolitionism with self-improvement and moral uplift. The appeal of the first Negro convention reminded Negro freemen "that knowledge is power, and to that end, we call on you to sustain and support, by all honorable, energetic, and necessary means, those presses which are devoted to our instruction and elevation, to foster and encourage the mechanical arts and sciences among our brethren, to encourage simplicity, neatness, temperance, and economy in our habits." Two years later, the national convention reported that temperance societies had been organized in several states and that plans for manual-labor schools in New York and in Philadelphia were under way.

But as repressive legislation stifled Negro organization in the South, the rising tide of Irish and German immigration, and the violent encounter between the Negroes and the new immigrants, rudely shattered the brilliant promise of an organized free Negro community in early 19th-century Philadelphia.* Anti-Negro riots began in 1829 and did not subside until after the Civil War. (In New York the Civil War itself was the occasion for the violently anti-Negro draft riots.) In 1836, Philadelphia Negroes even lost the right to vote—a right which they had possessed since 1790. It was "a time of retrogression for the mass of the race," wrote Du Bois. The Negro leadership was trapped between the prejudice and violence of the whites and the unmanageable, ever-growing mass of fugitive Southern Negroes streaming into the city.

That migration of illiterate and occupationally untrained Negroes before the Civil War, inundating the established communities of Northern Negroes, was a foretaste of the dislocation that was to come after the Civil War. On the eve of the Civil War there were almost 500,000 free Negroes in the United States, and four million Negro slaves. Only a small proportion of slaves had been trained as craftsmen (carpenters, coopers, tailors, shoemakers, bootmakers, cabinet makers, plasterers); others had labored in salt works, mines, on railroad construction and docks; but most had no experience beyond the cotton fields or domestic service. The vast majority were totally without education (according to the 1870 census, 80 per cent of non-whites in America were illiterate). The experience of free Negroes with associations for mutual aid and self-improvement had been fragile in the South, hardier and somewhat more durable in the North, but in North and South alike that experience had largely been confined to Negroes who possessed some education, skills, and means.

The havoc of the Civil War, the emancipation of the slaves, and the consequent disorganization of Southern society had the effect of submerging these comparatively advantaged free Negroes in the vast sea of newly-freed slaves, limiting their opportunities for economic and educational advancement, and reducing their capacity for independent leadership. As for the ex-slaves themselves, without financial or material resources, without skills or literacy, they were thrust into conditions of unparalleled misery.

To be sure, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land—established in 1865 and probably the first federal agency to assume responsibility for the welfare and protection of large numbers of the population—provided some help. But its main work ceased in 1869, and its only lasting legacy of achievement was the founding of several outstanding Negro educational institutions: Howard University, Hampton Institute, Atlanta University, Fisk University. By contrast, the Freedmen's Bank, set up by the federal government for Negroes, but operated by a private group, left only a legacy of mistrust and despair among Negroes whose scanty savings were dissipated—and never repaid—in mismanagement, speculation, and deceit.

In 1872, the Freedmen's Bureau ceased all operations. Five years later, the last federal troops withdrew from Louisiana and South Carolina. Reconstruction governments which had stood between the Negroes and whites were dissolved or overthrown. Without the military power and the civilian presence of the federal government, Negroes in the South remained without resources, without friends or allies. Thus, instead of a national effort being launched to make self-reliant citizens of the ex-slaves, all Negroes in the South were consigned to a marginal existence.

After Reconstruction, destitute thousands began

*See Eugene P. Foley's study of the failure of Negro business in *Daedalus*, Winter 1966.

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an exodus out of the South looking for a land of freedom in the North and West. In 1879 alone, some 40,000 migrated. The resources of the few private relief agencies were inadequate to cope with this flood, but though Congress investigated and debated the question of aid to the migrant freedman, it never enacted any legislation. As for the millions of Negroes who remained in the South, a new era of disenfranchisement and segregation awaited them: Jim-Crow legislation solidified Southern prejudice in a rigid and unyielding caste system; law and custom contrived for them an existence of poverty and humiliation.

In 1898, Du Bois published one of his first sociological studies under the auspices of Atlanta University, *Some Efforts of Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment*. Using materials collected by his students, Du Bois extolled the scope and variety of organized activity among Negroes:

> . . . there are among them 23,000 churches, with unusually wide activities, and spending annually at least $10,000,000. There are thousands of secret societies with their insurance and social features, large numbers of beneficial societies with their economic and benevolent cooperation. . . .Finally there are the slowly evolving organs by which the group seeks to stop and minimize the anti-social deeds and accidents of its members. This is a picture of all human striving—unusually simple, with local and social peculiarities, but strikingly human and worth further study and attention.*

Du Bois appears to have exaggerated the extent and stability of Negro association. He used his sources uncritically, because he was exploiting scientific study for defensive purposes, painting the reality larger than life. Though the Negro churches expanded with enormous rapidity and commanded the deep loyalty of Negro masses, they were often too poor in organizational and intellectual resources to develop stable self-help activities, and too much directed to the next world to build self-reliance in this one. As for the mushrooming fraternal orders, mutual-benefit and insurance societies, most were small, circumscribed, and short-lived. Undoubtedly, the regalia and ceremonials provided their members with an opportunity to escape the humiliations and hardships of the real world and to enjoy companionship and congeniality. But "loosely organized and poorly managed, with few or no regulations placed upon the officials, no controls, no actuarial studies," many organizations failed, unable to meet their obligations.† These failures, in the wake of the more spectacular failure of the Freedmen's Bank, discouraged the growth of associations for mutual aid among Negroes. They appeared to be—as they indeed were—incompetent, unreliable, and abusive of their financial trust, and they have left a heritage of suspicion among Negroes toward organizations for mutual aid.

III

Not the least important of the failures of these societies and churches is the fact that none of them produced a Negro leader of national or even regional stature. This, combined with the abdication of the federal government, meant that the first generation out of slavery—untrained for the newer industrial occupations and economically crushed in the competition for livelihood between the emergent poor whites in the South and the European immigrants in the North—not only had to combat prejudice and discrimination on their own, but also had to try, unaided, to surmount their educational, social, and cultural disabilities, the product of generations of slavery.

A small number of this first generation out of slavery succeeded in true Horatio-Alger fashion. Such a one was Booker T. Washington, the first authentic Negro leader of national stature to emerge in the post-Reconstruction era, and about whom Du Bois said in 1903: "Easily the most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the ascendancy of Mr. Booker T. Washington."**

The peak of Washington's national renown and acceptance by whites as a Negro leader came in his celebrated address in 1895 at the opening of the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta. That five-minute speech in which Washington expressed his philosophy of race relations at that juncture in American history served also to solidify rising militant Negro opposition to him. He began with a simple literary device:

> A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River.††

"Cast down your bucket where you are" constituted an admonition to Negroes to abandon ideas of emigration and to cultivate friendly re-

*Quoted from John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of American Negroes.*

†Robert H. Kinzer and Edward Sagarin, *The Negro in American Business: The Conflict Between Separatism and Integration.*

**"On Mr. Booker T. Washington and others," *The Souls of Black Folk*, in John Hope Franklin, ed., *Three Negro Classics.*

††Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography.*

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lations with white Southerners: Negroes, Washington urged, should turn to basic occupations "in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions," for "it is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top." But "Cast down your bucket where you are" also constituted an admonition to white Southerners to use Negro manpower in agriculture and industry instead of "those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits." The Negro, said Washington, felt a devotion to the white South "that no foreigner can approach," and he emphasized the historically close relations between the races and their common purposes. Yet lest he be misunderstood—this was Atlanta in 1895 when segregation had already become solidified in Jim-Crow legislation—he added: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." And on another occasion, decrying the agitation for social equality as "the extremist folly," he declared: "It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house."

Booker T. Washington, the spokesman for Southern rural Negroes barely a generation out of slavery, knew the disabilities of the people from whom he had emerged. He evolved a social and educational policy for the Negro masses which was intended to turn them into productive agricultural and industrial plebs. That policy began with what the principal at Hampton Institute had called "the gospel of the toothbrush," and included the use of bed sheets, the repair of torn and broken articles, the practice of cleanliness, thrift, and sobriety. (One is reminded of Abraham Cahan, editor of the Socialist *Jewish Daily Forward*, who made the use of the handkerchief a central article in his program for the Russian Jewish immigrants.) Washington believed it was to the advantage of the Negro masses to concentrate primarily on self-improvement and vocational training. He had hopes, or visions, that Negroes, once having shed the educational and psychological disabilities of slavehood, and disciplined and hardened by the practice of Protestant virtues, would eventually be accepted as civic, if not social, equals.

THE often-repeated charge that Washington represented "the old attitude of adjustment and submission" to the racist South originated among Northern college-educated Negro intellectuals—the radicals of the Niagara Movement, whose social, educational, and professional aspirations extended far beyond Washington's modest goals for the rural masses. Their view was given wide currency in Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, which termed Washington's philosophy "accommodation" and Du Bois's "protest." More recently, Howard Brotz, taking a fresh look at this controversy in *The Black Jews of Harlem*, described it as "a tension between the quest for autonomy—moral, cultural, political—of the American Negro as a people or a community [Washington], *and* the quest for the right to be integrated as individuals into a multiracial, universalistic society [Du Bois]."

This tension was a by-product of the stratification in socio-economic status among Negroes that was developing between 1890 and 1914. Negroes whose families had been free for several generations, or who had lived in the North for several generations, formed the core of a slowly expanding elite of college-educated professionals and businessmen, now numerous enough to constitute a full-fledged segment of Negro society—a social and economic group, rather than a mere handful of individuals. Out of this group came the Radicals. For themselves and aspirants to their class, the Radicals demanded a different educational policy from that which Washington advocated for the masses. Washington put his greatest emphasis on elementary and industrial education; they insisted on higher education. Du Bois himself, born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts and educated at Harvard (one undergraduate year at Fisk was his first exposure to Southern Negro life), advocated an elitist philosophy—education for the "Talented Tenth," to develop "the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst."

Washington had wanted to build an economically self-reliant community that could survive in autonomous self-sufficiency. (His main error, perhaps, was that his ideas were better suited to a pre-industrial than an industrial economy, and to the pre-Jim Crow Society in which they originally took shape.) The Radicals wanted total assimilation and total integration, including social acceptance in white society. (The rebuffs with which they met led them to occasional flirtations with pan-African nationalism, but at heart they adhered to their assimilatory purposes.) Out of this latter program two organizations, both interracial, came into being in the first decade of the 20th century: the NAACP and the National Urban League, the former politically radical, the latter more staid. The NAACP made its goal the achievement of equality before the law; the Urban League began as a social-welfare agency to help the Negro migrant adjust to the conditions of the Northern urban industrial and commercial centers. The Negroes in both organizations were nearly all Northern, college-educated, and more closely identified with white professionals and communal leaders than with other Negroes. Indeed, they had more acceptance from that white world than from the Negro masses, who did not—and to a surprising extent still do not—know

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them. Washington's leadership, in contrast, had rested on two bases—support from the mass of Southern rural Negroes and recognition by white political leaders. (With his death, Southern rural Negroes remained leaderless until the emergence in 1955 of Martin Luther King as a national figure.)

During World War I, Negro migration from the South to Northern industrial cities accelerated. Poor, ill-educated, untrained for industrial occupations, friendless and disoriented, the new migrants had no interest in, or benefit from, the NAACP's program, and the National Urban League was not yet in a position to help them. These urban Negro masses found their leader in Marcus Garvey, the Black Moses. A Jamaican who came to the United States in 1916 as head of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, he preached with spectacular success a doctrine of black nationalism and racial pride in African origins. At the movement's peak in 1920-21, Garvey was reputed to have had at least a half million members (some think even a million), and he raised more money than any Negro organization had ever dreamed of. The key to Garvey's appeal was that he exalted everything that was black. Black stood for strength and beauty; Christ, he said, was black and Moses was black. Garvey preached that Negroes must renounce all hope of assistance from whites. The Negroes' only hope was to leave this country of oppression and return to Africa. The Negro intellectuals hated Garvey, dismayed by the anti-white sentiments he articulated, for their expectations were based on cooperation with whites. But Garvey's followers came from the lower classes. He "put steel in the spine of many Negroes," developed race pride and compensation for feelings of inferiority.

Still, Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association expired in shame. Garvey was convicted of using the mails to defraud through raising money for his Black Star steamship line, though it is more likely that he himself was victim rather than victimizer. Sentenced to Atlanta Penitentiary, he was later deported as an undesirable alien to the West Indies, where he died. He left a dual legacy: an experience that reinforced lower-class Negro distrust of organizations that dissipated their funds, but also an exhilarating discovery of race pride through black nationalism. Today's Black Muslims are the natural heirs of the Garvey movement. (Elijah Muhammad, indeed, once paid tribute to Garvey as a "very fine Muslim.")

Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey were the outstanding exponents of the three major goals in Negro life: communal self-improvement, the struggle for legal equality, and race pride. Nowadays no Negro organization is dedicated exclusively to one or another of these purposes; all three strands are intertwined. The struggle for civil rights has out of its own inner dynamics bred a wider sense of community among Negroes, and helped to develop a more inclusive social policy. Negroes are now a community in the making, but a community which has not yet overcome its heritage of imposed divisiveness, and its history of frail and discouraging associational experiences. This community needs a stable political, social, and educational policy that will serve the needs of all, not just of a Talented Tenth. Can the existing organizations develop such a policy out of their own heritage of group associations?

IV

The "egocentric predicament," Ralph Barton Perry's phrase for men's inability to see the world except through their own eyes, explains some of the difficulties in communication among America's ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Each group regards the other from the perspective of its own experience and its own culture, and for this reason Jews have understandably been the group with the highest, and perhaps most unrealistic, expectations of Negroes in terms of self-help and communal organization. From Talmudic times on, Jews evolved a communal structure designed to maintain themselves as a distinct group and to transmit their religious culture from generation to generation; and this tradition was carried over to America. Thus the medieval *hekdesh* to care for the sick was translated in America into a great network of Jewish hospitals; the UJA fulfills the *mitzvot* of caring for the needy and redeeming the captives; the ORT continues to enable the poor to become vocationally self-reliant (in Maimonides's view, the highest degree of charity). So pervasive has the habit of philanthropy among Jews become that even country clubs require prospective members to make substantial contributions to UJA as a concrete expression of their identity with the congregation of Israel.

All communal organization is based on a "we feeling," an expanded family solidarity, and attachment to a shared culture. The crucial factor in successful organization of *formal* institutions is past experience in self-government, whereas simple and informal communal institutions may require little more than the "we feeling," the desire to maintain group cohesion. The Italian immigrants to America, for example, had little sense of a shared national Italian culture or of belonging to a national Italian polity, but the extended family sufficed to protect them against the stresses of the outer society. Loyalty to the family has remained the cornerstone of Italian group solidarity in the absence of formal communal institutions. Their economic attainments and their dominance in certain occupations—construction and sanitation are two such—have largely been the consequence of group cohesion and familial connections.

Among the Irish, group cohesion was nurtured

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by their history of English-Anglican oppression, by an assured and aggressive Church with its parochial-school system, by a prodigious sense of self-esteem, and a host of informal communal institutions. Among Greeks, fraternal societies served to preserve and develop a sense of communal belonging: those societies gave financial help to relatives and friends who remained behind in Greece, and they served to organize the American Greek community in support of the home country's political causes. The Chinese, too, maintained an extensive and interlocking network of benevolent, mutual-aid, and communal institutions, ranging from temples and churches to language schools and hospitals. Excluded from many occupations by state laws and labor unions, the Chinese went into businesses that might give them economic independence and they attained signal success in two fields closely related to domestic service, above which they desired to rise: laundries and restaurants.

THE COMMUNAL structures of these different ethnic and racial groups developed out of cultures which set a high value on the group's preservation and whose traditions of "self-government" the immigrants could adapt to their respective situations in America. Negroes have been largely deprived of any such experience of self-government by the particular forms of oppression to which they have been subjected. What they have is a history of fragile communal organization battered by repressive legislation and group divisiveness; and they have further been weakened as a community by the failure of middle-class Negroes "to play the role of a responsible elite," as the late E. Franklin Frazier put it in his classic work, *Black Bourgeoisie*. The Negro middle class, although relatively small (an estimated 26 per cent of the Negro population as compared with 64 per cent of the whites), nevertheless includes an expanding number of persons.* Yet only a handful of those at its topmost echelon (the one hundred wealthiest, listed in the May 1962 issue of *Ebony*) are on the boards of the National Urban League or the NAACP; nor, it would seem, have those below this economic level been notable for their philanthropic concern with fellow Negroes.

This traditional weakness in communal structure is perhaps an even more serious handicap today—when the economic gap is widening not only between Negroes and whites, but also between the Negro middle class and the Negro masses—than it ever was. But tradition is not a static phenomenon; and while it cannot be imposed from without, new cultural patterns can be forged from within when the will to establish them exists, as now seems to be the case to a greater extent than previously among the Negro middle class. Thus, all the major Negro organizations are nowadays engaged in some self-help projects (while carefully avoiding that designation). As one might expect from its history, the Urban League is foremost among them—concerning itself with family problems, home and neighborhood improvement, vocational guidance and back-to-school programs for the young—but the NAACP recently also began to move into this field, organizing "Citizenship Clinics" in the North. Then, too, there is the recent growth of savings-and-loan associations owned and operated by Negroes (Elmer M. Lancaster of the Department of Commerce calls this one of the most significant factors in the American economy). And finally, on the national scale, there are agencies like the National Council of Negro Women and the National Business League.

Apart from the major organizations, we also find hundreds of small, local efforts of a more or less informal character. There are "The Leaguers" in Newark, New Jersey, an organization for Negro teenagers founded sixteen years ago by Mrs. Mary Burch, an educator and social worker, to stimulate and encourage Negro teenagers to continue their education through college and also to teach youngsters self-reliance through community service. The United Credit Union, established in Watts about a year before the riots, is now the center of self-help activity in the area, many residents having lost their jobs in the wake of the riots, and small-loan companies having tightened up credit to Watts residents. Finally, there are such projects as "Operation Upgrade" (in Bedford-Stuyvesant), and the Morningside Parents Association and the New Era Neighborhood Association (both in Harlem).

What is most interesting and paradoxical about mutual aid among Negroes today, however, is that some of the most effective programs are being carried out by the least likely leaderships—the Black Muslims at one extreme, and at the other, those militant civil-rights groups which react with the deepest outrage to the idea of Negro "self-improvement."

Until very recently, the Black Muslims were the only important Negro organization dedicated to self-improvement on a large scale. The Muslim movement has striven for a total transformation of Negro values and traditions. The movement is anti-white, but its moral values are rigidly puritanical and "bourgeois." While the Muslims have succeeded in fashioning a community with high self-regard, they have only been able to do so at the expense of promoting race hatred. Moreover, the Muslim movement is self-defeating, for as Rustin puts it: . . . "every prostitute the Muslims convert to a model of Calvinist virtue is replaced by

* Between 1950 and 1960, for example, there was a threefold increase in the number of Negro engineers; the number of architects increased 72 per cent, natural scientists, 77 per cent, lawyers, 43 per cent, dentists, 31 per cent, and physicians, 14 per cent. Overall, some 300,000 Negroes have been added to this class since 1940.

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the ghetto with two more. Dedicated as they are to maintenance of the ghetto, the Muslims are powerless to effect substantial moral reform."

The paradox underlying self-help among Negroes is most apparent in the militant civil-rights groups where but to mention "self-help" is to invite attack. Yet mutual aid is precisely what the militancy of these groups has more and more led them to emphasize in their struggle to win equality. Thus, in Selma, Ala., McComb, Miss., and elsewhere in the heart of Klan territory, Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other civil-rights organizations have been setting up Negro cooperatives to compensate for economic reprisals against Negroes who have registered to vote—the Poor People's Corporation, cooperative groceries, sewing cooperatives, and other types of business. Thus also, the volunteers in the 1964 Mississippi Summer program (whose political objective was the Freedom Democratic Party) found themselves involved —almost inevitably—in literacy and tutorial projects, in community centers and vocational training. The militant selective boycott program of Philadelphia Negroes to win jobs from big industrial firms made possible the uniquely successful vocational training program (the Opportunites Industrialization Center) conducted by Negro minister Leon Howard Sullivan. Here the élan of civil-rights activity has carried over into job training: "It's attitude we stress," Sullivan says. "We teach probably 25 per cent skill and 75 per cent attitude. The Negro has got to get his head up and believe in himself."

OIC is now giving special pre-job training to some 1,000 Negroes at a time, helping them to brush up on their reading, writing, and arithmetic, and to improve their speech and even their personal grooming. "Many trainees," Sullivan points out, "walk 15 to 20 blocks morning and night to seize the opportunity offered by OIC." Not surprisingly, this enterprise has won the backing of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and the so-called "white power structure." The Office of Manpower, Automation and Training of the U.S. Department of Labor stepped in with a $458,000 grant and the federal anti-poverty program has contributed $1,756,000. But perhaps the most hopeful thing about this project is the fact that Negroes themselves have twice managed to raise $100,000 in city-wide drives to support it.

V

In 1915, the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was formed as a vehicle through which educated Negroes might rediscover their obscure or forgotten historic traditions. The emphasis was on Negro "contributions": it was a defensive and apologetic emphasis, for educated Negroes (like many Jews) used to be ashamed of their past and wished only to obliterate the memory of submission and accommodation. But as each new generation everywhere revises its view of the past, so, too, are today's younger Negro writers and historians doing: they are coming to see their past—including slavery—not as a sheer humiliation but as a reservoir of dignity and courage in the face of appalling oppression. Ralph Ellison expresses it this way in *Shadow and Act*: "Our Negro situation is changing rapidly, but so much we've gleaned through the harsh discipline of Negro American life is simply too precious to be lost. I speak of the faith, the patience, the humor, the sense of timing, rugged sense of life and the manner of expressing it, which all go to define the American Negro."

A true Negro community is now beginning to emerge out of the civil-rights movement. Northern, college-educated young Negroes, in their unique version of populism, in their American-style "going to the people," are expressing solidarity with illiterate Southern Negro sharecroppers, not by rhetoric, but demonstrably by their presence in Alabama and Mississippi. Others are dedicating themselves to serving the Negro poor and outcast in the Northern slums. They are creating new traditions out of which authentic communal associations are developing—traditions as indigenous to the Negro and as relevant to the special complexities of *his* particular condition as immigrant-aid societies and hospitals were to the Jews.

It seems obvious that this is both a necessary and a helpful trend and that everything should be done to further it. No service is performed by those Negro leaders who attack the idea of mutual aid—however understandable the motives behind the attack. When Negro leaders call self-help an Uncle Tom concept, claiming that it implies that Negroes are themselves responsible for their plight and asserting that the responsibility belongs wholly to white society, they may be adopting the right tactic for replying to white people; but what of the impact on the Negroes who overhear? Is it not likely that part of the effect is to dampen Negro initiative, and to help delay the time when the Negro upper and middle class will at last become the "responsible elite" Frazier wanted it to become—earning leadership through a sacrificial involvement in the plight of the Negro mass, deserving it by generous financial contributions to meet communal needs? Would it, then, not be better if, while the primary objective of securing crash programs is being pursued, the newly reawakened impulse toward mutual aid among Negroes were at the same time encouraged and reinforced, instead of derided and decried?

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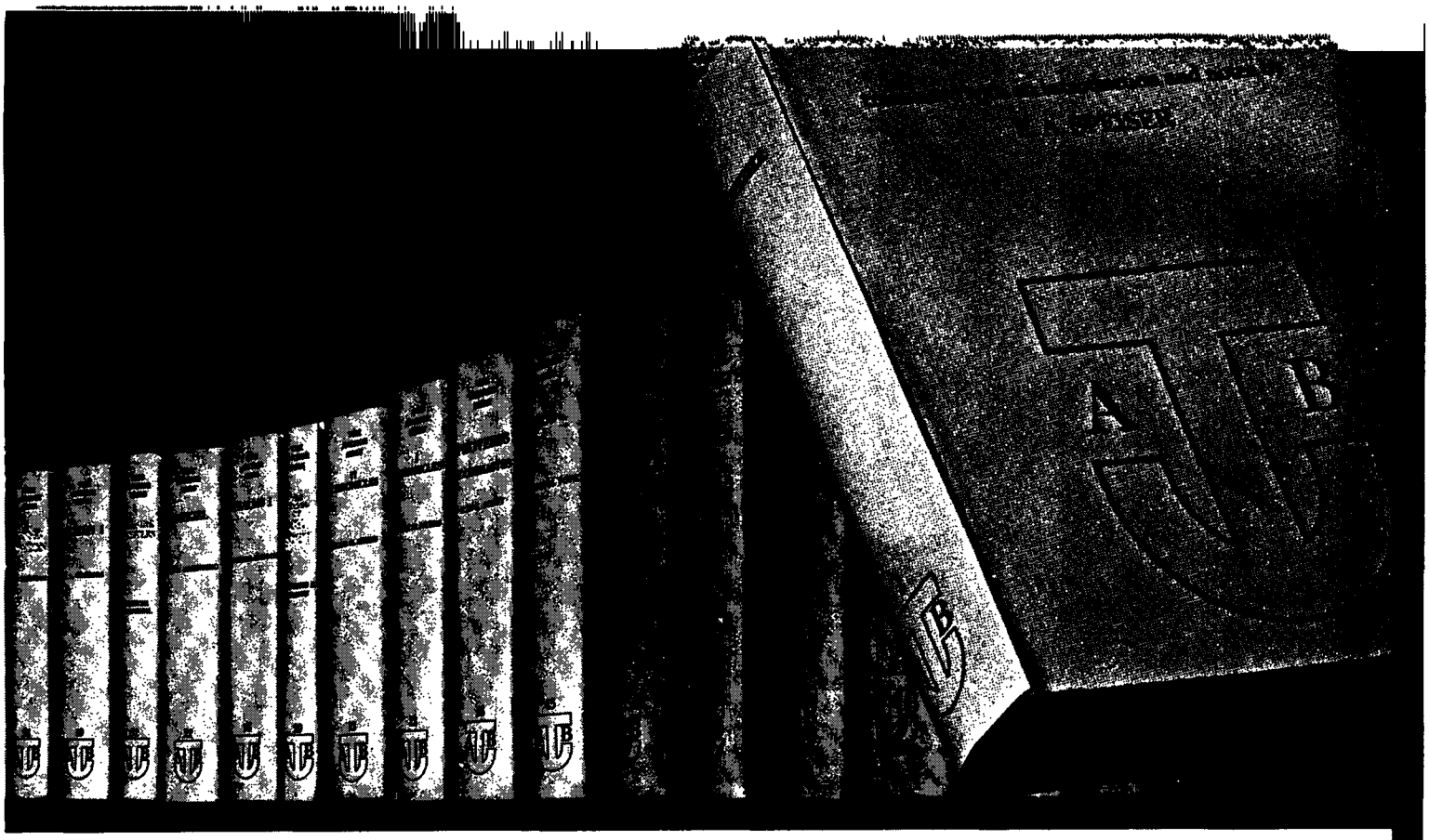

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*David Daiches, COMMENTARY, September 1965

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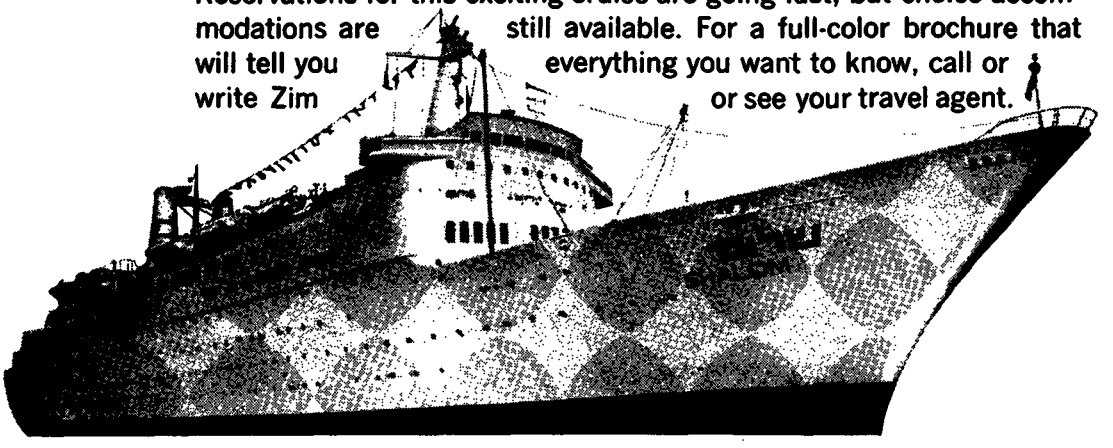

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BENJAMIN SCHWARTZ

CHINESE VISIONS & AMERICAN POLICIES

WASHINGTON is, of course, aware of Peking's hopes for the future; one is tempted to add, only too well aware. What might be called Mao Tse-tung's optimum global vision has only recently been called to our attention once more in Lin Piao's widely publicized article, "Long Live the Victory of People's Wars."* Here we find Asia, Africa, and Latin America enveloped by "wars of national liberation" strictly modeled on the classical pattern of the Chinese revolution. The ingredients of this classical model can be clearly enumerated. The war must first of all be led by a genuine Marxist-Leninist party (which now means a party oriented to Peking); the party must rely primarily on peasant support and establish rural base areas; the peasant-based people's armies must fight a type of guerrilla war which draws its basic inspiration from Mao's maxims on this subject; the people's war must also be supported by a broad united front of "all those with whom one can unite" which will, however, remain firmly under Communist control. In this way the main enemy will be effectively isolated. In spite of Peking's continuing denunciations of Moscow's effort to "wave the baton" in the Communist world, one need not doubt that the Chinese themselves dream of waving the baton decisively in a world Communist movement reconstituted through the Maoist strategy and now centered on Peking.

In the face of assertions that Lin Piao's statement represents a newly-proclaimed Chinese *Mein Kampf*, and in the interest of historical perspective, it is important to point out that all the essential features of this statement were contained in Liu Shao-ch'i's famous speech in 1949 to the meeting of the Asian and Australian wing of the WFTU. At the time, to be sure, the message was delivered within the limits imposed by a seemingly monolithic international Communist movement led by Moscow. Liu could, in fact, deliver the speech only because the Kremlin was for the moment itself lending a certain hesitant and suspicious support to the notion—rendered plausible by certain developments then current in Vietnam, Indonesia, India, and Malaya—of the applicability of the Chinese model to other areas of the non-Western world. It was made entirely clear, however, that the center of world Communist authority lay in Moscow. Since then, the inhibitions have been removed, and Peking has been able to proclaim its vision in all its imposing amplitude.

Nevertheless, that vision was probably more unambiguously plausible in 1949 than it has ever been since. The rapid retreat of the Western empire had just begun and by no means seemed inevitable (from the Communist perspective least of all). The isolated cases of Indian and Philippine independence could easily be dismissed by both Moscow and Peking as a bourgeois sham, and the hope that rising nationalism would everywhere come under Communist leadership was vivid and reasonable. Ho Chi Minh was even then the paradigm of the popular nationalist leader who was also a convinced Marxist-Leninist.

The rise within the next few years of new states under non-Communist auspices and the failure of various Communist efforts in Asia subsequently led both Moscow and Peking to adjust their sights to a world which neither had foreseen. Out of this experience, there emerged the famous Bandung policy of cultivating Asian, African, and Latin American states already in being, whatever the nature of their internal polity. Bandung is often depicted as a triumph of Chou En-lai's suave diplomacy. If it was a triumph, however, it was a triumph of massive adjustment to an unlooked-for situation—hardly a triumph of the vision projected by Liu in 1949. Since Bandung, Peking's policies toward the third world have oscillated within the range of possibilities lying between the optimum vision and the Bandung line, while certain particular policies toward particular states can be explained quite satisfactorily in terms of the most conventional power politics. No doubt, the optimum vision remains the "esoteric" doctrine closest to Mao's heart. Yet there have been considerable stretches of time when the vision has been discreetly thrust

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* See "China's Strategy—A Critique" by Donald S. Zagoria in the November 1965 COMMENTARY—Ed.

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into the background for the very solid reason that it is difficult to cultivate the existing states of Asia, Africa, and Latin America while simultaneously calling for their overthrow by "genuine" Marxist-Leninist wars of liberation.

IN THE Lin Piao statement the optimum vision does, to be sure, reemerge to the surface in full clarity—perhaps to encourage patience in Hanoi by stressing the "protracted" nature of the classical people's war; perhaps because at a time when the Bandung approach is generally not flourishing, a reaffirmation of the faith seems necessary; perhaps, again, because of the continuing need to distinguish Peking's "pure" line from the adulterations of Moscow. But whatever the real motive behind the restatement of the original vision at this time, a careful scrutiny of Lin Piao's article reveals the odd fact that, side-by-side with the maximum projection, ambiguities and ambivalences can be found which leave the doors wide open to alternative approaches. For example, having asserted that "national democratic" revolutions must be led by *genuine* "proletarian parties," having declared that *genuine* independence can be wrung from the imperialists only by "people's wars," and having contemptuously dismissed the socialist claims of all states not ruled by *genuine* Communist parties, Lin Piao avoids going on to draw any concrete conclusions. That is, he sedulously refrains from assigning the existing states of Africa, Asia (with the exception of India), and Latin America to the ranks of the "lackeys of imperialism"; nor is he likely to do so, as long as Peking continues to cherish hopes of a "Bandung" type conference in which it would play a leading role.

The Lin Piao document simultaneously gives expression to the optimum vision and to diluted versions of it. The original united-front doctrine —the doctrine of "uniting with whom one can unite"—was meant to apply *within* given societies. In the diluted version, entire established nation-states are brought into the doctrine. Thus, the theme of the class struggle between rich and poor has been extended to "rich nations" and "poor nations." Very recently, even this conception was diluted by Mao's further extension of the doctrine to the not-so-poor nations of the "second intermediary zone" (Western Europe, Canada, etc.) which might conceivably be included in a vast united front against the main enemy—the United States.

While all this may appear to represent an enormously clever extrapolation of Mao's maxims, the fact remains that uniting with "poor nations" is not the same thing as uniting with the poor. The genius of the Maoist united-front strategy lay in its ability to combine absolute discipline and clarity of purpose in the core organization—the Chinese Communist party—with a maximum of maneuverability *vis-à-vis* other social and political groups *which it could effectively control*. The notion that the established states of Africa, Asia, and Latin America—no matter how poor—are as subject to direction from Peking as were the peasants of North China or the "Democratic League" during the late 40's, is based on a false analogy between incomparable entities. On its immediate periphery China may, of course, exert the same types of coercive pressure which other great powers exert toward their weaker neighbors. This does nothing, however, to demonstrate the demonic effectiveness of the Maoist strategy. Indeed, in dealing with the whole "first intermediate zone," Peking has already discovered that a simple appeal to common poverty and to a colonial past will not automatically lead existing states with their own concrete conceptions of national interest, their own specific histories and preoccupations, and their own sensitive pride, to accept Peking's "hegemony" in any international united front. Nor will it be at all easy to convince states which have had little experience with the United States in the past, to think of it as Chinese patriots thought of Japan in the 30's and 40's.

The ambiguities created by such dilutions pervade the Lin Piao document. Does the sensational assertion that North America and Europe now constitute—"in a sense"—"the cities of the world," while Asia, Latin America, and Africa constitute the "rural areas," refer only to the vast peasant masses of those latter regions, or does it also refer to the established regimes there? The answer is left in what is probably an intentional haze. No doubt, any regime willing to accept Peking's slogans will at least provisionally be included in the category of "rural areas" even if its polity be that of a feudal monarchy.

Even the concept of "war of national liberation" is subjected to dilution by Lin Piao. After stating flatly that people's wars must be led by the "proletariat," Lin Piao concedes, in passing, that "various classes [that is, non-Communist political elites] may lead people's wars against imperialism." Thus, in his list of countries which have undergone genuine "people's wars," Lin Piao is able to include Algeria and Indonesia (the Indonesia of the period before the recent coup), despite the fact that neither of these cases fits the classical model outlined elsewhere in the same article. In Algeria, it is true, the elements of armed revolution, guerrilla warfare, and base areas were present, but the most vital ingredient of all—the leading role of a "Marxist-Leninist party"—was missing, as it certainly was also in the case of Indonesia.

"War of national liberation" has become, then, one of those accordion-like terms which can be given either a strict or broad construction. Even states which have achieved independence by the most innocuous and pacific means may qualify as members of the anti-imperialist camp so long as they express the correct attitudes toward U.S. im-

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perialism. *A fortiori*, Peking is likely to apply the term "war of national liberation" to almost any revolution or rebellion anywhere in the third world on the assumption that any violent disturbance can only propel the Chinese wave of the future and weaken the United States. It is one of the great triumphs of Peking's propaganda that Washington has come to agree with this view. If Washington had been in the same frame of mind with respect to "wars of national liberation" during the Algerian revolt, the United States would no doubt have thrown its full support behind the French policy of suppression.

In sum, then, the Lin Piao article simultaneously restates Peking's maximum hopes and reflects all the adjustments which Peking has had to make to a world which—with the notable exception of Vietnam—has so far failed to shape itself to Chinese expectations.

BUT WHAT of the future? The idea that the whole third world will easily succumb to China's infallible strategies has won ready acceptance among a large assortment of C.I.A. operatives, Pentagon strategists, professional Communist experts, games-theoreticians, political scientists, and others. Only yesterday, we had an enormous literature designed to show that the Soviet model and Soviet strategies would prove irresistible in the third world. It having since been discovered that Moscow must cope with a world as unpredictable and refractory to its own purposes as it is to ours, the same style of thought has now been transferred to China.

It would, of course, be utterly presumptuous to predict that the Chinese optimum strategy may not succeed in this place or that. The pressing question at the moment, however, is: which is the more dangerous—to predicate American policy on the fear that the whole third world is ripe for a "Chinese take-over" via the Maoist strategy, or to base it on the assumption that the third world is likely to develop in ways infinitely more varied and complex than anything dreamt of in Mao's philosophy? One would, at the very least, expect that arguments weighing against the Chinese projection would be given equal weight with arguments tending to support it. The great receptivity to the Chinese projection seems to rest, at least in part, on a theory which many of us share with the Chinese themselves—namely that the third world (whether it be described as "the rural areas" or the "underdeveloped" ones) is so homogeneous in its essential features that any political strategy which succeeds in one sector of this world may be expected to succeed in another. What is true of one underdeveloped, agrarian society is true of any other.

From some points of view, the features which all these societies have in common may indeed be of overriding importance. It is, however, extremely doubtful that the political destiny of any one of them can simply be deduced from the characteristics shared by all. The emergence and ultimate success of the Maoist strategy in China itself, for example, were made possible by certain very specific conditions existing in China during the 30's and 40's—primary among them the failure of the Nationalist government to achieve firm military control within its own territory. This special feature of the Chinese political landscape, which helped to create and shape the Maoist strategy (as Mao himself has often admitted), is by no means universally present in the states of the "underdeveloped" world. Whatever may be their failures in other areas, many of these states (India for one) have proven quite capable of creating fairly unified and disciplined national armies. Apart from this, there is the fact that China, particularly North China, was subject during the 40's to the Japanese invasion and that Japanese military power was subsequently dispersed in many directions; and there is the fact that Mao Tse-tung and his group not only developed their strategy, but were also superb implementers of it. The very combination of Marxism-Leninism and nationalism that characterized Mao and his group was itself a product of certain peculiarities of Chinese history during the 20's and 30's—peculiarities which there is no compelling reason to expect will be duplicated in the Nigeria of the 60's.

The Vietnamese case offers little real basis for generalizing, for the striking thing about Vietnam is that it has, to a unique degree, shared some of the characteristics of the Chinese situation. While the proximity to China must be given its own due weight in the history of Vietnam since 1945, the decisive point is the emergence of a shrewd, able, and ruthless Vietnamese Communist group which succeeded in gaining fairly effective control of a genuine Vietnamese nationalist movement. As indicated above, even in 1949, Ho Chi Minh's movement represented the only Communist operation in existence which closely approximated Liu Shao-ch'i's model. This movement continued to find support in certain segments of the population of the South who identified with it out of nationalist motives. Above all, it was able to apply its strategies against a regime which suffered from some of the same weaknesses as the Nationalist government in China. There was vast rural discontent, which Diem proved incapable of handling; there was his inability to unify and control his own military elite; and there were bitter communal divisions within the society which, while not resembling anything which had existed in China, produced effects similar to the regional fragmentation of power there.

But what of the other countries of Southeast Asia? They are all within geographical proximity of China, and none can afford to ignore the Chinese reality or the possibility of direct Chinese military intervention. To the extent, however,

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that Chinese hopes in this area still rely on the efficacy of the Maoist strategy, is it inevitable that Thailand—to take one case—must follow the path of Vietnam? In recent months there have been many reports suggesting that Peking is now "turning on" its strategy in Thailand. Behind all such reporting, of course, lies the assumption that the success or failure of the strategy depends on buttons pressed in Peking, even though we have little evidence to show that the spectacular rise of the Vietcong during the last few years has, in fact, had anything to do with immediate direction from Peking, however welcome it may have been to the Chinese. In assessing the potentialities of the strategy in Thailand, therefore, it is the following questions which have to be examined. Does the Thai government effectively control its own armed forces and are these forces reasonably cohesive? Is there acute discontent in the countryside (outside of the much-discussed Northeast)? Is the direction of the incipient "people's war" in the hands of Thai leaders, or are Laotians, Vietnamese, and Chinese (in the South) playing a dominant role? These are the relevant questions, whatever the Chinese may wish and however the war in Vietnam may go.

IT MAY, of course, be argued that even if the Chinese are not able to export Communism by exclusive reliance on their own revolutionary strategy, they will prove flexible enough to use other methods to achieve the same end. To do this, however, they will need more than those few precariously pro-Peking Communist groupings now in existence; a whole host of new Marxist-Leninist movements under effective Chinese control in places where they do not now exist will have to be created. The view that they will easily be able to create such a vast movement rests again on an unflagging belief in an ongoing entity called "world Communism" or "international Communism" which somehow has a life of its own over and above the sum total of actual Communist states and parties, and which remains unaffected by the vicissitudes of its constituent "detachments."

Involved in all this is a refusal to take the crisis which has erupted in the Communist world in recent years with real seriousness. Only yesterday, the phrase "world Communism" was generally used to describe an ostensibly monolithic power system centered on Moscow and based on the unquestioned authority of the Kremlin; the phrase referred not to a disembodied set of ideas, but to an organized movement. Now, however, one often encounters among those who speak of "world Communism" a view which conceives of Communism as a kind of homogeneous unchanging substance which is, to be sure, subject to shattering but whose inner essence remains unchanged even after fragmentation. Since the substance remains the same the shattered parts may again be reassembled and resolidified at any moment (this time, presumably, under the leadership of Peking). Furthermore, the expansive capacity of the substance also remains unaffected by the experience of fragmentation. (It is no accident, incidentally, that many who argue most strongly for this particular view of "world Communism" were among those who most strongly insisted in the past that the system was monolithic and unbreakable.) However much they may come to differ, we are told, all Communist states share the aim of achieving Communism.

But what is Communism? Theoretically, the power to define what it is remains the exclusive prerogative of the Communist party. In Communist ideology, the party is not merely a political organization: it is the embodiment of of all those transcendental qualities which Marx attributed to the industrial proletariat. Whatever the good society may be, it can only be attained by the Communist party, for it is the Communist party which alone has access to the inner secrets of history and which can therefore apply infallibly correct solutions to the unfolding problems of history. As the embodiment of the general will of the proletariat, the party should be trans-national and immune to inner conflicts of interest. These attributes of infallibility, universality, and unanimity have been the inner essence of the Communist party as the ultimate mystery of Marxism-Leninism. Can one say that this mystery has remained unaffected by the recent crisis in the Communist world?

The Chinese, to be sure, have found a comforting precedent for the crisis in the history of Communism. Lenin, they say, often found himself in the minority within the Russian Social-Democratic movement. He did not hesitate to break with the majority when the majority was wrong, and in the end his truth prevailed. Here again we find ourselves in the realm of false analogies. Can the relationship between vast Communist nation-states be compared with that between warring factions among Russia's Marxist intelligentsia? Will China be able to deal with the USSR and its ideological claims in the manner in which Lenin disposed of the Mensheviks after October 1917? Will China be able, in any foreseeable future, to suppress the claims to Communist legitimacy of the Yugoslavs, the Poles, the Rumanians, or the Italian Communist party? The hard fact is that for all its pretensions (some quite spurious) to a purer Marxist-Leninist doctrine, Peking is doing quite as much as Moscow to undermine the transcendental status of the world Communist movement. The famous doctrine that the decisions of any given Communist party (i.e., that of the USSR) are not universally binding on other Communist parties subverts not only Moscow's

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claims of central authority but *all* future claims of other potential centers of world Communism. It need hardly be pointed out that the slavish obedience to Moscow's line by foreign parties during Stalin's lifetime was not based on reasoned judgments that Stalin was always right, but precisely on the doctrine of the infallible authority of the Kremlin. Even if the Chinese do manage to create new pro-Peking Communist movements in Africa and Latin America, can they ever expect to exercise the type of authority over these groups which the Kremlin formerly exercised over the Communist world?

WHAT is actually happening behind all the polemics is that the nation-state is asserting its primacy over the trans-national claims of Marxism-Leninism while the very concept of an ultimate authority decays. To be sure, this still leaves open the possibility of the elaboration of national varieties of "Communism." The Maoist vision of the good society is one such variety; the day has passed, however, when one variety of national Communism is accepted without question as the mandatory image of the future even by "Marxist-Leninist" groupings.

The question of whether there can any longer exist an ultimate seat of authority in the "Communist world" and who—if anyone—will occupy this seat has now become the very heart of the Sino-Soviet conflict. It is probably not a question which can be resolved by compromises and agreements on the substantive issues which occupy the foreground of the polemics. But could it be resolved—as some have argued—by a reversal for the United States in Vietnam which would prove the Chinese contention that the U.S. is "a paper tiger" unable to cope with local "people's wars," disprove the Soviet position that American power must be respected even in this area, and convert the whole of "world Communism" to China's outlook? Even this is highly doubtful. For if it is meant that Moscow will itself be converted to Peking's outlook, it must be pointed out in the first place that Moscow's ideological position on "wars of national liberation" has by no means been as consistently "revisionist" as Peking would have us believe. Even now there is some question as to whether Moscow is, or is not, willing to lend support to Cuban-sponsored wars of national liberation in Latin America. In the improbable event that Moscow were to acknowledge Peking's correctness on this issue, Peking has guaranteed itself against the necessity of reconciliation by imposing on Moscow a whole catalogue of impossible conditions on other issues. As for the East-European Communist states and the Communist parties of Western Europe, which have adopted a generally "anti-Chinese" stance, they have done so for solid political reasons of their own, and they are not likely to be swayed into the "Chinese camp" by debaters' points. And finally, Peking's ability to create strong new Chinese-oriented Communist parties throughout the third world will continue to depend on local conditions within that world and not merely on the "demonstration" effect of Vietnam.

In sum, the Sino-Soviet conflict has—to use a term employed in the polemic—become a "hegemonistic" conflict. The two principal actors have grown more concerned with the question of who shall prevail than the question of who is right. But this does not mean that either one or the other must prevail, for both the Communist states and the Communist parties lying between the two are probably less and less interested in having an ultimate source of infallible authority anywhere.

IN emphasizing the enormity of the present crisis in the Communist world, I have no intention of implying that the world is "going our way," if by "our way" we mean the imminent universal enthronement of American-style liberal democracy or European social democracy. The retreat of empire has produced neither the Communist floodtide nor the "Western" or "American" century. The major drift has been in the direction of what might be called, for lack of a better term, populist-nationalist dictatorships. Whether their power rests on a single party or on the armed forces, the leaders of such states invariably claim to incarnate the will of the "people-nation." On many issues, no doubt, they are closer to the Communist world than to ours. They generally profess adherence to "socialism," their anti-colonialism often draws on the Leninist vocabulary, and they often find it expedient to denigrate the mere "machinery" of political democracy in favor of "organic" theories of representation.

One need not conclude, however, that this development is in any sense "inevitable." Some societies may avoid it. All one can say is that circumstances in many areas have been favorable to it. Nor need one gratuitously idealize it as do some elements of the "New Left," on the grounds that it is revolutionary and "socialist": some of these states may prove abominably corrupt, exploitative, and ineffective; others may be fairly effective in important areas and reasonably decent. Nor, again, need one be led by a dogmatic liberalism to assign them all to the Communist camp and refuse to coexist with them. The same development might well have occurred if Marx and Lenin had never lived, since the basic fund of ideas on which these leaders draw was, in fact, fully available in certain Left Jacobin-nationalist tendencies emerging out of the French Revolution. Ultimately, indeed, these ideas may turn out to be hardier than the more spectacular hybrid, Marxism-Leninism. Given the infinitely less intense and less transcendental nature of the ideologies governing the new states, there is

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a good chance that they may not go the whole way to totalitarianism, that they will prove more relativistic and technical-pragmatic in their economic approaches, and that they may also perhaps prove open in the long run to demands for personal freedom. Above all, one must remember that the overruling passion of these leaders is the passion to remain masters in their own households. This involves the refusal to accept any claims to hegemony—including spiritual claims—from outside. Since we, on our side, are presumably unburdened (or are we?) by an official philosophy which imposes on us the duty to universalize our own system, one would think that it would be a great deal easier for us than it would be for either Moscow or Peking to live with this passion for national autonomy.

IT HAS, of course, been argued that all these regimes are simply halfway houses to Communism, and that the Chinese need but wait a little longer before an unstable third world—faced with enormous economic, demographic, and social problems—succumbs to Maoist strategies. No doubt, a minimum requirement for the survival of these states is that they show some movement in the direction of solving their problems, but it is far from certain that they must "solve" all of them immediately in order to remain viable. As a minimal *sine qua non,* they must demonstrate their power to maintain basic political and military control of the areas under their jurisdiction. But even where a given regime is overthrown, there is no reason to think that its successor will be less passionately concerned to maintain its own independence and autonomy. The notion that the Communist world possesses simple formulae for solving economic, demographic, and social problems which will prove irresistible in the third world is daily confounded by the growing diversity of "models" within the Communist world. The Chinese model (itself in a state of flux) no longer follows the Soviet model and does not resemble either the Yugoslav or even the Polish model. Fidel Castro, in spite of his adherence to Marxism-Leninism, has yet to find anywhere in the Communist world a ready-made model adequate to the concrete problems which confront him. Furthermore, while it continues to be represented as an ultimate and inevitable apocalypse or nemesis, the very nature of Communism has become highly problematic. Marxism-Leninism itself is proving a kind of halfway house to types of national "socialism" which oddly approximate some of the tendencies in the third world. There may arise in the future spiritual and social movements capable of bursting through the tough integuments of the nation-state framework, but one may strongly doubt whether the Communism we have known and experienced in the past can qualify any longer as such a movement.

I WOULD suggest, then, that it is mistaken and dangerous to base American policy on the expectation that the whole third world is about to behave in a manner corresponding to Peking's optimum hopes for the future. It must be stressed again that these hopes are grounded not on the exportability of Chinese soldiers, but on the exportability of Chinese revolutionary strategy. Peking may staff its embassies with huge contingents of experts in "people's war" who will try to manipulate the "natives," but it has yet to be shown that the embassy staffs are quite that clever, or that the natives are quite that manipulable. Even in Southeast Asia where the Chinese can, and may yet, intervene with troops, Peking still fervently wishes to rely on the salability of its strategy. In Vietnam the strategy has, with adaptations, been quite effective—not because of buttons pressed in Peking or because of huge embassy staffs, but because of the very particular political history of Vietnam. Its effectiveness in other countries of Southeast Asia remains a function of internal situations in those countries, particularly if we assume the ongoing presence of American and Soviet power in the area.

Is Peking capable of adjusting to a world which does not correspond to its maximum hopes? Granted that in the mind of Mao and those closest to him the hopes are still active and real, the fact is that the process of adjustment has long since begun. The Bandung line of 1955 represented a major retreat from Liu Shao-ch'i's line of 1949. The current effort to cultivate commercial and even political relations with states of the Western world and with Japan can only be squeezed into Maoist categories by stretching these categories to the breaking point. Even the extraordinary concession which Peking has felt obliged to make to the principle of national independence and autonomy within the Communist world in the course of its polemics with Moscow, constitutes an unacknowledged adjustment. In the eyes of Mao, these adjustments may represent temporary expedients which will soon be rendered unnecessary by the true wave of the future. There is, however, no need for us to accept Peking's assessment of their significance.

It nevertheless remains true that a minimum condition for Peking's adjustment to a world as recalcitrant to her most grandiose ambitions as it is to the ambitions of the rest of us, is the recognition of China's status as one of the great world powers: a willingness—nay, an eagerness—to move as far as we can to involve and enmesh China, however harsh and unaccommodating its behavior may be, in whatever precarious structure of world order we have.

There is a reasonable possibility that, as a recognized great power, China would in the end come to accept its position in a world of nation-states large and small. To some, it may seem foolhardy to predicate foreign policy on "reasonable possibil-

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ity" rather than on "policy science." I would simply urge that what we have on the other side is not science but unthinking extrapolation of the Chinese maximum vision, and a host of ill-considered clichés and stereotypes (put forth by people on various sides of the policy debate). We have, for example, the notion that whereas the Russians are "Western" (although they were considered "Oriental" by many only yesterday), the Chinese are occultly Oriental, or Asiatic. What conclusions one is expected to draw from this distinction, I do not know. A candid survey of the span of Chinese history leads to no firm conclusions on the question of whether the Chinese are more or less belligerent or more or less fanatical than Westerners: certainly, the imperial state was not more aggressive than the Czarist empire. We have the further stereotype that with its vast population, China must of necessity achieve world hegemony. From this, some have drawn the conclusion that we ought to recognize Chinese hegemony as quickly as possible, while others have called for the immediate dispatch of a few well-placed missiles. Then we have the notion that "Asia" must inevitably form part of a Chinese empire either because China controlled "Asia" in the past (which is false), or because Asians are all alike culturally or peculiarly prone to submit to those of superior strength. While China will undoubtedly play a leading role in Asian, and indeed world, politics, the fact is that Asia is not a political, and certainly not a cultural, entity: there are many states in Asia as little anxious to form part of a Chinese empire as states on other continents and probably as resourceful in avoiding this fate as others.

FINALLY, there is the more serious argument that the Chinese leaders still think of China as the center of civilization in a world of barbarians. Here I would point out that the cosmology of Chinese universal kingship on which this faith was founded has collapsed along with the world which made it plausible; that while Peking does regard itself as the center of an international faith, it is not the same faith which animated "sinocentrism" in the past (it is, in fact, a faith many of whose tenets are not even Chinese); and that the China of the present finds itself in a world which will continue to reject its "sinocentric" claims. These are all considerations, it seems to me, which may be quite sufficient to overcome the pull of mental habits inherited from the past.

I have not here attempted to put forth solutions to our Vietnamese dilemmas. Obviously, whether we regard Vietnam as the first "test case" in a chain reaction leading to a realization of the Chinese optimum vision, or whether we accept the reasonable possibilities suggested above, is a question which bears very strongly on the price—military, political, and moral—we are willing to pay to maintain our present position in that unhappy land.

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Pax Russo-Americana?

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

THE LONDON weekly *Spectator*, the intellectual organ of British Conservatism (a respectable creed, not to be confused with the demagogic nonsense that elsewhere goes under the same label), some months ago headlined an editorial "Towards a Pax Russo-Americana." Admittedly, this was last January, during the bombing pause in Vietnam and in the midst of the Indo-Pakistani peace conference at the Tashkent "summit." But the heart of the argument is not affected by the subsequent escalation of the war in Southeast Asia. It remains as true today as it was three months ago that "the basic force for order in the focal areas of instability in the world today must be [the] further development of the emergent Pax Russo-Americana." To state this is not of course to say that it is actually going to happen. Political reality does not always evolve along lines that seem rational to the observer. The two German wars of this century can serve as evidence that great nations are quite capable of embarking upon self-defeating and suicidal courses. Yet it is significant that the custodians of Britain's imperial tradition should view present realities in a mood very different from the temper prevalent during the 1950's. Twenty years after the outbreak of the Cold War signalized the breakdown of the 1945 peace settlement in Europe, a significant section of British opinion has come round to the belief that a Soviet-American partnership is not merely desirable, but actually at the point of being established.

This clearsightedness is the more admirable in that it goes with a dispassionate appraisal of Britain's shrinking role in a world in which the wartime alliance of equals with the United States is no more than memory. "In the interests of peace, we can only welcome the emergence of the Pax Russo-Americana. . . . But we cannot ignore the fact that as America turns her back on the struggle against Russia in Europe, to devote her energies to the struggle with Russia against China in Asia, the status of Britain degenerates from principal ally to something like displaced person. To be precise, we are wanted, but no longer needed."

It takes a degree of stoicism on the part of a Tory journal to deliver this kind of judgment, but then the British have in recent years had plenty of opportunity to practice this mood. For the rest, the more intellectual Tories share with de Gaulle (whom they publicly oppose and privately admire) a conviction that great conflicts between nations or empires are something more substantial than disputes over what is comically known as "ideology." Sir Alec Douglas-Home, speaking before the Economic Club at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York not long ago, delivered himself of a fairly traditional appraisal when he remarked that the Sino-Soviet split had been brought about by China's growing appetite for Siberia—"a much more tempting target . . . than the impoverished and overcrowded Indian subcontinent." This may be a bit too simple: a clash between totalitarian states by definition involves the totality of their rival structures (party leadership included), not just territorial control. But it is a safe guess that there are men high up in the Soviet administration who share the outlook of Britain's last Tory Prime Minister. The Russian military leaders, at any rate, (like their colleagues elsewhere) must privately regard all the fuss over the correct interpretation of Lenin as so much eyewash. They are probably mistaken so far as Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues are concerned, for there is reason to believe that the present leadership in Peking is genuinely addicted to the doctrines it proclaims in public. But mistaken or not, this kind of military realism undoubtedly plays its part in shaping Soviet attitudes toward the mounting Chinese threat.

What, then, is the role of Maoism as a doctrine in the recent aggravation of the Sino-Soviet dispute? The question would be easier to answer if the Peking regime had not repeatedly displayed a strain of shortsighted cynical empiricism quite irrelevant to its long-term strategy and highly embarrassing to its sympathizers abroad. By now the list is fairly lengthy. It includes the 1962 military assault on India over a trivial border dispute; last September's unprincipled intervention on the side of Pakistan (a far more conservative regime than India's) during the brief flare-up between the two successor-states of the former Indian Empire; adventurous bluster against Delhi at the expense of the Indian Communist party, leaving that party (even its pro-Chinese left wing) in a highly vulnerable position; long years of cyn-

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ical backing for Sukarno's demagogic anti-Westernism in Indonesia, followed first by an abortive attempt to get rid of him, and then by silence while some 300,000 Indonesian Communists were slaughtered by the army and the Moslems in the greatest disaster ever to befall a Communist party in Asia since Chiang Kai-shek's notorious massacres in 1927; hasty support for the Boumedienne regime in Algeria on the morrow of *its* successful anti-Communist coup, followed once more by embarrassed silence when Algiers showed no desire to reciprocate; pointless intrigues in a half-a-dozen African states; the grotesque and extremely damaging (for Peking) quarrel with Castro; and last but not least, the continued propaganda barrage against real or alleged Soviet peace moves in Hanoi, coupled with reckless advice to the North Vietnamese to fight to the last drop of (their own) blood.

AGAINST THIS background of bluster and failure, it is not surprising that Moscow has succeeded in swinging the greater part of the world Communist movement back into its own orbit. Peking has indeed left its supporters in the movement high and dry. On top of this, the combination of doctrinal intransigence with cynical "realism" has by now made most of the Afro-Asian world wary of China, dissipated much naive goodwill, and paradoxically played into the hands of those Soviet diplomats who really believe that a Russo-American *cordon sanitaire* around China is a matter of urgency.

This provisional balance-sheet, it must be supposed, is sufficiently obvious to have caused some concern among the party leaders in Peking, who after all are quite familiar with Asian realities, even if not very good at interpreting Western thought processes. Why, then, do Mao and his colleagues persist in a course which by now has resulted in their isolation within the Communist movement, not to mention the non-committed world? Psychological factors may account for obstinacy on the part of aging men never too well-informed about the world beyond their borders. But in the main, Peking's commitment to its peculiar strategy must be seen in the context of Maoism as a political movement.

It is a mistake to regard Mao and his followers as Leninists concerned to preserve the purity of the original doctrine. They are no longer even Stalinists, for Stalin never renounced the long-term perspective of a seizure of power by some, at least, of the West European Communist parties. However "Eurasian" his own cast of mind (not to mention his political methods), he remained to the end a prisoner of the Leninist doctrine that a "proletarian revolution" in the advanced industrial-capitalist countries was an ultimate inevitability. The originality of the Chinese Communists lies in the fact that they are no longer bound by Lenin and Stalin (not to mention Marx, who has simply been promoted to the vacant place of Confucius). The proletarian revolution, and with it the international working-class movement, have been written off and replaced by a strategy based on the antagonism of the have-not countries against the haves: more precisely, on the revolt of the world's agrarian hinterland against the metropolitan centers. It is ludicrous to call this Marxism, or even Leninism (itself a fusion of German Marxism with Russian Populism). The Maoist mentality goes back to Bakunin, the prophet of revolt against industrial civilization. But it is Bakuninism minus the anarchist hostility to the state, for to the Maoists (as to their unsuccessful Nationalist precursors), the state is the great engine of popular education and national regeneration. If "the people" remains the ultimate source of authority, the state is the concrete embodiment of that revolution-from-above which is to make China great and respected: provided, of course, that the state continues to be identical with the party, whose superior wisdom is transmitted to the lower echelons of the bureaucracy, and thence to the people as a whole.

There is some logic in this position. Given the tasks facing the regime, in a country far more backward economically than the Russia of 1917, the fusion of Communist totalitarianism with traditional Chinese nationalism was a relatively simple matter. So was the commitment to break-neck modernization and the near-total militarization of public life. What prevents the rest of Asia (not to mention Africa and Latin America) from taking Maoism more seriously as a "model," is the evident failure of the industrialization drive: the "great leap forward" was not, after all, a success. The fashionable comparison with India is spurious, for China's real rivalry is with the USSR and with Japan. India may suffer from catastrophic famines and industrial mismanagement: Japan does not. As for the USSR, it has successfully industrialized itself on a "socialist" basis and can now claim to be America's only rival. Thus China finds itself blocked, and it is this failure that accounts for the political fury of Maoism.

To escape from the impasse in which it finds itself, the regime must rely on the total mobilization of its only major asset, the Chinese people, while beyond the borders of China it can count on support only from those who are similarly situated: either because they have failed to modernize themselves, or have no desire to try, or because the political context is such that it is plausible to hold "Western imperialism" responsible for the prevalence of misery and exploitation. There is no lack of such regions, or of students and vagrants ready to take to the hills. Yet the quarrel with Castro shows that Peking tends to lose out in the competition with Moscow wherever the revolution carries the "socialist" label. It is a po-

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litical necessity for *every* modernizing regime in this age to call itself "socialist," and the only question that remains is under which of the competing international flags the country in question prefers to set sail. So far, Moscow is ahead in the competition, its only rival being Gaullist France, with Labour Britain nowhere, and the United States universally regarded as the rich man's friend and the scourge of the poor and homeless.

It is, of course, most unfair that America should be viewed in this light, especially when one considers that U.S. food shipments, however inadequate, currently represent the slim margin between ordinary famine in India and wholesale catastrophe. But fairness has little to do with the matter. India may be dependent on U.S. food surpluses, but in itself this is more likely to rouse resentment than to promote gratitude. Indian nationalism has for years been kept going by the hope of achieving a degree of economic self-sufficiency permitting India to play an independent role on the world stage—possibly a foolish aim, but nationalist movements are alike in valuing prestige above all else. As matters stand, Delhi is back to the starting-line, with repeated monsoon failures threatening to make the country wholly dependent for years on the United States, and with political trouble brewing in the countryside at the same time. However much the pro-Chinese wing of the Indian Communist party may have been weakened by Peking's recent behavior, it probably retains sufficient strength to rouse sections of the peasantry to revolt in those parts of the country where food shortages can plausibly be blamed on Indira Gandhi's Congress party and its local following of landowners and grain merchants.

If the policy-makers in Washington were capable of lifting their eyes from the Vietnamese bog, they might perceive the outline of coming troubles on a scale large enough to inspire Toynbeean rhetoric about the convulsions in prospect for the 1970's. China, at least, seems to have solved its food problem, to the extent of guaranteeing a bare minimum for everyone, or almost everyone. India has not, and does not look like making significant progress in the coming decade. This is the other side of the coin when viewed from Peking. It makes up for some recent political setbacks and for the relative failure to speed the rate of China's industrialization. The latter, incidentally, if it were ever to gather speed and transform the country's archaic structure, could only lead to the dissolution of the primitive consensus which is the social basis of Maoism. An industrial China would infallibly reproduce some of the tensions now racking the Soviet Union. At the very least, it would set the technicians against the regime, and the urban workers against the peasants: in short, it would induce what old-fashioned Marxists used to call "class conflict." Mao is right in asserting that at present this is not a problem, the reason being quite simply that Chinese society is still backward enough to afford a large measure of primitive egalitarianism. At the risk of sounding paradoxical, one might say that if Chinese Communism ever became a real economic success at home, China would at last make the acquaintance of capitalism, or something like it: at any rate, enough of it to give its Marxists something to do. If the regime lasts long enough, this may turn out to have been its chief contribution to the country's social development: one of those ironies of history that are so much easier to perceive if one assumes with Hegel that nations, like individuals, seldom know what they are actually up to.

No heretical thoughts of this kind are likely to trouble the mental slumber of China's present rulers. Their intellectual sophistication has hardly advanced to the stage of such self-questioning. In any case, they have no choice. Nationalism and pseudo-Leninism propel them in the same direction, and if they had any doubts as to the overriding importance of industrial-*cum*-military strength, these uncertainties would have been settled for them by the consistent hostility of the U.S. government: an antagonism antedating the Vietnamese conflict.

That the United States and China are on a collision course has by now become a conviction so solidly implanted in the rest of the world, from Europe via the Middle East and India to Japan, that one can hardly blame Mao and his colleagues for treating it as an axiom. They are, of course, to blame for having evolved a self-fulfilling prophecy which has the effect of closing all other options, but then an almost similar degree of fatalism has lately been manifested by others, including the British. One reason why the idea of a "Pax Russo-Americana" has become popular in Britain is quite simply the growth of a conviction that large-scale "trouble" with China is to be expected at some time in the 1970's. Similar considerations doubtless underlie recent French moves, including de Gaulle's intervention in Hanoi and his forthcoming visit to Moscow in June.

It has not escaped the attention of the Europeans that U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia is increasingly rationalized on grounds having little to do with the entanglement in South Vietnam. The emphasis has shifted toward long-range considerations which would not be markedly affected if some sort of settlement could be patched up between Hanoi and Saigon, or even if Hanoi moved away from Peking to the extent of acquiescing in an American military "presence" in the South. The stakes are getting bigger and even another Geneva conference would hardly affect the growing conviction on all sides that Washington and Peking are simply maneuvering for position with an eye to the coming showdown.

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As to the probable date of that confrontation (to employ a fashionable synonym: the old-fashioned term "war" being unpopular, and probably illegal as well under the UN Charter), no more than guesswork is possible, but a small amount of light has recently been shed. At the NATO conference in Paris last December, Mr. McNamara tried to make the Europeans' flesh creep with forecasts of China's growing nuclear capacity in the coming decade. Other hints were dropped in Washington and London on the occasion of last January's visit to the United States by leading British personalities. Both before and after Mr. Denis Healey and Mr. Michael Stewart, respectively in charge of Defense and Foreign Affairs, had met Messrs. Rusk and McNamara, the British press was filled with officially-inspired speculation about Britain's role "East of Suez" after 1970: clearly an important date. On January 26, the London *Times* felt able to report a significant difference of opinion between the U.S. State and Defense Departments on this subject: Mr. McNamara, it appeared, was prepared to accept "a partial rundown of British forces in Western Europe" by way of filling what was described as "the gap in the American defense perimeter, a gap that stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Siam"; he also appeared to be undisturbed by hints that Britain might have to give up Singapore and Aden, and fall back upon less costly bases in Australia. Mr. Rusk, on the other hand, in the opinion of the paper's Washington correspondent (from whom the British Embassy keeps few of its secrets), "wants Britain to stay where she is. He would welcome a British contingent in Vietnam . . . but would be happier if she stood ready to defend the former imperial territories in Africa, while the United States took care of China."

These high-level geopolitical discussions caused some consternation among Mr. Harold Wilson's followers when reports of them filtered back to London, but the British Cabinet showed itself ready to accept the logic of the situation. At any rate Mr. Healey soon took off for Australia, to see what could be done about a replacement for Singapore, and on his return the Cabinet voted in favor of buying American aircraft rather than developing Britain's naval carrier-based forces: apparently on the grounds that time mattered and that the early 1970's were likely to be a danger period (also, perhaps, because the alternative to purchasing American aircraft was Anglo-French co-production of a rival plane—a project strongly backed by the Conservative Opposition).

As usual in the case of the Labour Government, the pro-American school defeated the pro-Europeans, whose chief exponent, Mr. Roy Jenkins, was moved from the Air Ministry to the politically less-exposed Home Office. On February 18, the New York *Times*, with a perspicacity rare for that journal, noted: "The British are asking the United States to join in financing a substitute base in Western Australia to be ready in 1970" (again the magic date) "to receive some of the F-111's that Defense Minister Denis Healey has come to Washington to purchase. But the Johnson Administration—unwilling to be left alone in Southeast Asia so long as the Vietnam war continues—is urging the British to hold on in Singapore whatever the cost."

Whatever the cost to the British taxpayer, that is. That cost is almost certain to include the devaluation of sterling and a consequent rise in the domestic price level. As an editorial in the *Spectator* on February 11 put it with uncommon frankness: ". . . we cannot continue to afford well over 300 million pounds a year in military spending overseas, most of it 'East of Suez,' and at the same time avoid devaluation. In plain English, either East of Suez or the pound will have to go."

A fortnight later, the official Defense White Paper made it clear that the Cabinet was determined to preserve at least the semblance of a British role "East of Suez"—while limiting the total defense budget in 1970 to a figure insufficient to provide an independent British carrier-based force. As Mr. Christopher Mayhew (who resigned from the Government in protest, along with a bevy of admirals) correctly pointed out, this decision not merely sacrificed the navy (for which he happened to be responsible), but also reduced Britain to an auxiliary of the U.S. in the Far East. On these grounds, he recommended complete withdrawal from the region, and a further reduction of the defense budget, in the interest of economy (and of saving the pound, though this was only implied). His colleagues plainly believe that in a financial emergency the U.S. Treasury will bail them out. But how often can this performance be repeated?

Against this somber background, the deepening American involvement in Vietnam begins to make sense, if not politically, then at least militarily. For as long as one of General Gavin's "enclaves" can be held (and before long this may become the unstated aim of the policy-makers), it is at least possible to find an excuse for holding on to bases like Camranh, now rapidly being built up as a major naval fortress far exceeding in size and importance what it was under the French. One does not hear much being said about Camranh, but the significance of its swelling size is unmistakable. As the Manchester *Guardian* remarked on January 27, ". . . even in this country, let alone in Hanoi, it does not much look as though the Americans are going to withdraw from Vietnam in the foreseeable future, peace or no peace; too much has been invested, politically and even economically. The building of the base at Camranh, for instance, is no short-term project."

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Indeed it is not. Hence there was no ground for surprise when last February's Senatorial hearings in Washington extracted both from Mr. Rusk and from General Maxwell Taylor the admission that the "independence" of South Vietnam (its independence from the North, that is) remained the prime objective of American policy. So much for the offer of "unconditional" negotiations. Any process of negotiation which threatened to compromise the "independence" of Saigon would clearly translate itself before long into a "dependence" on the Vietcong sufficient to rule out an American armed presence in the South. Clearly, this is what the war is currently about. Those American critics of the official policy who dislike its consequences while accepting, or not challenging, its presuppositions, have lately taken to arguing that conceivably even the Vietcong might in the end compromise on this issue, even if Hanoi (not to mention Peking) did not. The war is after all being fought largely by Southerners, and a peace conference might give them a chance to assert themselves. This kind of reasoning, whether realistic or not, inevitably leads one into the trackless bog of Southeast Asian politics. Whatever the local complications, it is now fairly clear that the only settlement acceptable to both Peking and Hanoi is one that rules out an American armed presence; while the only outcome acceptable to Washington is one that perpetuates it.

THE public rhetoric to which office-holders in a democracy are necessarily committed is not a safe guide to such topics. Consider the embarrassment of having to affirm officially that U.S. retention of the base at Camranh is no longer negotiable. The public can hardly be expected to understand these niceties, after having been told for so long that the war is about abstractions like "freedom" and "honor." On the other hand, one must be fair to the policy-makers: just because they obviously cannot "win" the war, it does not follow that they are irrational in trying not to lose it. They can after all argue that if Vietnam can be partitioned once more (whatever the legal formula), the essential minimal "presence" in the South can perhaps be saved. What is more, they may be right (though by now even this modest aim is beginning to look a bit utopian).

The unspoken presumption behind all this is the need to go on with the "containment" of China, and the near-certainty of large-scale trouble with the rulers of that country in the 1970's, when it is supposed they will have a nuclear establishment big enough to represent a threat to Japan and Australia, if not (as yet) to the United States. On this subject there now appears to be a consensus among the experts sufficient to warrant the statement that China can afford the minimum outlay necessary to qualify as a serious nuclear power, i.e., one equipped with something more than primitive plutonium bombs. In the case of France, a relative newcomer to the club, the equivalent expenditure was reckoned by the London *Economist* (January 15) to amount to a capital outlay of 1,000-million pounds, or about three billion dollars: not an excessive sum for either a modern European country or—at the other extreme—a very large and determined Asian one like China. (On the other hand, the cost is probably just too high for India in its present condition, not to mention such recent disasters to Delhi's plans as the death of its leading nuclear physicist, Dr. Homi Bhabha, buried in the snows of Mont Blanc amid the wreckage of an Air India jet.)

WHAT, then, are the distant prospects of a tacit alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union—an alliance in whose actual present existence the Chinese, but few other people, affect to believe? (Castro plainly does not, for which one can hardly blame him.) It is probably a misfortune that this subject generally tends to be discussed in terms appropriate to what is known as "a deal." In reality, more than that is required, though deals cannot be ruled out (they are more likely, however, to emerge at the close rather than at the beginning). What is required, after all, is a reorientation of long-range Soviet strategy, hitherto mesmerized by the conflict with the United States, and a corresponding change of attitude on the part of the American government and public: not to mention America's allies, among whom the West Germans, at any rate, have every reason to regard such a prospect with the direst of forebodings.

It is easy to see that the two super-powers have something in common. Above all, they both have a great deal to lose, and in this sense they share an interest in avoiding a major conflict anywhere in the world that might oblige them to intervene on opposing sides. This community of interest in the avoidance of catastrophe underlay the Cuban confrontation of October 1962. It has been made manifest once more by the limited extent of Soviet intervention in Vietnam, though thanks to Washington's elephantine subtlety this particular issue continues to be posed in such terms ("resistance to Communist aggression") that Moscow cannot well use its break with Peking as an excuse for withdrawing from Hanoi. When even the French are fed up with American intervention on the side of the Saigon regime, the Russians would have to deny their entire revolutionary faith, and lose their hold over the "third world" (not to mention their own supporters in Asia) if they did not uphold the North.

There is deadlock here, but it is a deadlock which no longer pits Communists against anti-Communists in the manner of the 1950's. Since the United States and China represent extreme positions in this conflict, it is becoming possible for the Russians, the Indians, the French, and

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various minor countries, to appear as moderators: and this without prejudice to Moscow's continued leadership of most of the Communist bloc. This is a welcome change from the old uncomplicated Dulles pattern, when extremists on both sides had the more or less willing support of almost everyone in Europe and Asia. All this is gone, as India's and Pakistan's recent acceptance of Soviet mediation in their private quarrel showed. Communism is no longer the *only* issue that matters (except to the Washington policy-makers). The Russians themselves are beginning to realize that a conflict between Communist states is possible, while conversely it is not inconceivable that peace—genuine peace—may be made with the West. This mental change is the biggest event of the past few years. Its continuance is bound to condition the chances of a genuine East-West settlement.

It does not follow that the West can do nothing but sit and wait. It, too, has to alter its collective mental orientation: away from the crusading faith of anti-Communism and toward a pragmatic (blessed word) acceptance of the world as being necessarily made up of pro-Western, Communist, and neutral regimes, with the Communist bloc increasingly polarized between the belligerent faith of Peking and the conservative mood of Moscow. Does this represent a return to ordinary "power politics"? Taken literally, the question is meaningless: politics is about power and about nothing else. There is no such thing as a particular brand of politics concerned with power, as distinct from a nobler and more idealistic kind. Insofar as the absurd term "power politics" is meant to describe a state of affairs where nations are concerned with the defense of their interests, and not with the promotion of world-revolutionary upheavals, it does indeed appear that the world outside China is slowly reverting to this traditional pattern, if only because the spread of nuclear weapons cuts across the issue of world revolution: no country, whatever its regime, can afford to disregard *that* kind of threat. In this sense, there is now a tendency to return to the kind of pattern of relationships that was formerly considered normal.

China is the great exception. But it is just this fact which tends to promote the cooling of revolutionary and crusading ardors in both Washington and Moscow. Their cooling, not their disappearance. Nor need there be an abandonment of national beliefs and traditions. It is as foolish to expect the Russians to give up Leninism and the cult of the October Revolution as it is to expect Americans not to celebrate the Fourth of July. What may be expected to change is the practical relevance of these quasi-religious obeisances. Their polarity reflects the simple circumstance that, politically speaking, there is no such thing as One World. When this has been acknowledged by both sides, it will be time to consider the means for bridging the gap dividing the rest of the international community from China.

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Going to Shul

MILTON HIMMELFARB

In the past months, since my father died, I have been in the synagogue twice a day to say the Kaddish. Other congregations would regard mine as observing bankers' hours, but its morning schedule nevertheless requires arising in the dark and cold, especially in the winter. For afternoon-and-evening prayer the hour varies, depending—at least in principle and in Orthodox synagogues—on the time of sunset, but going every evening is not easy, either.

Which is why not even the devout necessarily frequent the synagogue every day, contenting themselves with private prayer, particularly on weekdays. It is the man who is saying the Kaddish who must have a *minyan,* public worship. In most American synagogues nearly everyone you see at prayer during the week is a mourner, together with most of those who are there from the beginning on Saturday morning. Inconvenience also helps to explain the 10th-man problem, quite apart from the big explanations we like better: the difficulty of belief, the difficulty of prayer. In few synagogues where the speech is English and the faces shaven is it unnecessary to have a list of volunteers who can be telephoned in an emergency in order to round out the required number of ten.

In the Middle Ages it was thought that saying the Kaddish for a year was especially helpful to the dead if they had been wicked. Since no one wanted to imply that his father or mother had been wicked, today we say the Kaddish for eleven months. I do not know what proportion of Jewish men observe the full eleven months, but I suspect it is fairly high, especially when put beside our known propensity for staying away from the synagogue.

If this is so, why? Well, feelings about death, especially the death of a parent; guilt and anxiety, and the need to relieve them; ritual—all these can be interpreted along conventional Freudian lines and have been, often. For Freud, religion was a kind of public, collective neurosis. I take this idea seriously. It tells me better than anything else why the very inconvenience of saying the Kaddish morning and afternoon-evening every day for eleven months, and thereafter on anniversaries—normally at least two in a man's life—becomes a virtue, perhaps an attraction. It is expiatory, it is almost punitive, and we have been taught that guilt seeks punishment.

It is more, of course. Much has been said in dispraise of Jews who obey the rules of the Kaddish though otherwise they hardly ever pray at all. The contempt is unwarranted: the Kaddish must meet their needs better than anything else in the synagogue. And these are not only needs of the kind we have learned about from Freud, but also needs for style and tradition. Freud said that the collective neurosis of religion spares us the trouble of developing individual, personal neuroses. With the Kaddish, Judaism spares each Jew the trouble of developing for himself a style—etiquette, ritual, mode of expression, symbolic action—at a time when he wants it and when he knows he cannot devise something personal that will be as good.

If each of us were accountable for his own ritual of mourning, who would escape censure? Who would escape his own censure? The Jewish rites—the burial, the seven days at home, the Kaddish—have the advantage of being a tradition, a style. We need assume no responsibility for them, as we would for any personal or private symbolic action, nor can there be any question of their appropriateness. They are appropriate almost by definition, because of their antiquity, their near-universality, their publicness—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.* Yet their publicness, so far from making them exterior and impersonal, makes them all the more appropriate to the particular relationship between mourner and mourned: the Kaddish I now say for my father, he said for his; and so back through a recession of the generations that exceeds what my imagination can grasp. Acting as my father acted, I become conscious that I am a link in the chain of being. Nor am I hindered from expressing particular, local, present emotion.

One of the things a Jew is supposed to say about someone who has died is the prayer that Abigail said for David (though in his lifetime and in his presence), that his soul may be bound up in the bundle of life. Saying this is of a piece with the rest of our ritual. Whatever its efficacy may be for the dead, it binds *me* up in the bundle of life, situates *me* in the procession of the

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generations, frees *me* from the prison of now and here.

Although we have been born when it is hard to believe in immortality, the Kaddish helps us to believe, a little. I know that it makes me think of my father often, more than forty times a week; and it will keep reminding me of him after I have stopped saying the Kaddish daily, when I hear someone else say it and I make the appropriate response. To think of my father, to recall him, is to hold off his mortality—and because ritual is eloquent, to hold it off still one generation further. Where has Daddy gone? To shul, to say Kaddish for Grandpa. By doing what allows my children to ask this question and receive this answer, I also allow myself to hope that my own mortality will similarly be delayed.

A KADDISH-sayer and shul-watcher can learn something even if his experience, like mine, has been limited to not many more than a dozen synagogues, Orthodox and Conservative, mostly in or near New York.

With our past and present confusingly simultaneous, many of us are not in the category we should be in. Of the elderly and immigrant, for instance, it is to be expected that they will use a Polish-Russian Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew; of the middle-aged, the standard Ashkenazi that was taught in our Hebrew schools a generation ago; and of the young, the more or less Israeli, more or less Sephardi pronunciation that is now taught in most schools—for instance, *yitbarákh*, "may (he/it) be blessed": standard Ashkenazi, *yisboráKh;* Polish-Russian, *yisbórekh, yisbúrekh*. With eyes closed, you can usually know the man by his Hebrew. Usually—but I have opened my eyes after hearing *yisbúrekh* to see a youngish man who could be in advertising or public relations. And as with pronunciation, so with the atmosphere and the ways of a synagogue. In any synagogue you are apt to find people who by all the rules belong more properly in a different one.

Jews who are americanized (or anglicized, or gallicized; before Hitler, germanized) want restraint in their synagogues, in the officiants as well as the laity. The virtuoso cantor, I had thought, came into his own at a certain time in history, when Jews from the traditionalist villages were moving to the big cities of Europe and America, and he disappeared when their children learned that his kind of singing was out of place in a church. I have not heard really gaudy *ḥazzanut* anywhere recently, but I have heard other survivals from the bad old days where there was no reason to expect them: a kind of falsetto throating; stretching or repeating some words and swallowing others; singing as if the text consisted of vowels alone, without consonants.

If bar-mitzvahs are a horror, as everyone says, they are normally not so in the synagogue itself. That may come later, somewhere else. But even so, the accumulation of bar-mitzvahs, two or more a week, week after week, can be too much of a good thing. By now I can do without the high voices, and the slow chanting, and the charge to the boys, and the congratulations to the parents, and the benediction, and the presentation of kiddush beakers and prayer books, and the boys' pledges and thanks. If I am querulous, put the blame on lingering shock. Not long ago I heard a bar-mitzvah boy double as cantor when the Torah scroll was being returned to the ark. At that point the cantor summons the congregation with a verse from the 148th Psalm: "Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted." Instead of *yehalelu et shem,* however, the boy sang *yeḥallelu . . .* , "Let them profane the name . . ." ! (The identical phrase is in Leviticus, negatively of course: ". . . that they profane not My holy name," *we-lo' yeḥallelu et shem qodshi*. "Profanation of the Name," *ḥillul ha-shem,* is the rabbinical term for blasphemy specifically or conduct unbecoming a Jew generally.)

Sometimes I wonder about the bar-mitzvah guests. The occasional woman in a sleeveless, near-décolleté dress—where does she get her notions of seemliness? The uncle for whom the Hebrew blessings are practically nonsense syllables but who accepts being called up when the Torah is read—why does he do it? Since his abject stammering is surely as painful for him as for the rest of us, he might at least rehearse the syllables a day or two earlier.

In my wanderings I have discovered an argument, new to me, against the Orthodox segregation of the sexes. It is still true that when women sit by themselves they talk, and in shul they have to be shushed—one of the few things our grandmothers have in common with their college-graduate granddaughters. When in a Conservative synagogue and dispersed among the men, the same women seem to talk less than when in Orthodox isolation. After one deafening Sabbath morning near the divider between the men and women, I could appreciate the answer of the great Rabbi Israel Salanter—I think it was he—when he was asked what should be done with some bricks left over from repair work on a synagogue: "Use them to wall up the entrance to the women's gallery." In a way, that is what Conservative and Reform Judaism have done.

I HAVE a research project for a specialist in the social psychology of small groups: examine a daily *minyan*. It is an ideal opportunity for a participant-observer, especially if you have to move about from time to time and so get to see how others are.

Take the *minyan* in the congregation I belong to. When you consider that its members are unhappy about having to be there in the first place

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and that its composition changes, veterans departing as newcomers enter, its morale is remarkable. On the whole they are not conspicuously pious Jews, but most make it a point of honor to disregard bad weather and hazardous driving to get there on time. Clearly they believe that the *minyan* must go on, that it would be wrong to let the side down.

So strong is this sentiment that it makes some who have finished their eleven months keep coming, if not every day then one or two mornings during the week. That is when it counts, because Saturdays and Sundays are no problem. Getting up early when they want to sleep a little longer, and could, their own daily Kaddish-saying now behind them, they show a devotion and self-sacrifice more to be respected than the writing of a check or the signing of a petition. These men do the inconvenient thing so that the other men, who need the *minyan*, will have it. And though they may be too bashful about this motive even to admit it to themselves, I suspect they do it, too, because of what they think a shul should be: a place from which the praises intoned by Israel ascend, as is said of the *Shema'*, "evening and morning, twice every day always, lovingly"—or thrice, if you take the afternoon prayers (which lack the *Shema'*) and the evening prayers to be separate in fact as well as principle.

I have the impression my *minyan* is something of an exception in its morale. At any rate, I find it more attractive than others I have seen. It has little of the prevalent mumbling combined with sprinting that is another survival from the bad old days. In my *minyan* we sing. Not only that, but also I can actually finish one prayer before the next is begun. We are out at the same hour every day, because it is the starting time that varies, not the leaving time: we start early on Mondays and Thursdays, when the Torah is read, and earlier still on a New Month. With the time for leaving calculated and fixed, we do not race the clock. For the kind of people we are, the singing and the deliberate pace ratify our being engaged in what we recognize as suitable prayer. It may even make us a little more prayerful than we would be otherwise.

Not many of us have or attain *kawwanah*—inwardness, concentration, the merging of the pray-er with his prayer. They say it used to be common. Whether or not that is so, I can hardly recite a verse of six or seven words without my mind wandering. (I can hardly listen to three bars of music at a concert without my mind wandering.) Beside *kawwanah*, decorum and singing and pace and every other occidental propriety are trash. Unfortunately, though, their absence does not guarantee its presence; and if we are going to have to do without *kawwanah*, we may as well have niceness. Let a man be free enough from haste to be at least aware of the plain meaning of the words he is saying or singing. When he leaves, hurrying to his car, let him not have a bad taste in his mouth.

I STILL catch myself daydreaming about the things I would do if I were rich. Lately, one of those things has been to have my own shul, with the legislative, executive, and judicial powers all mine. I would make some radical reforms, of a generally reactionary character.

As among the Sephardim, I would have the reader read every word aloud, from beginning to end, except for meditations intended to be silent or those minatory admonitions that are traditionally muted, like Deuteronomy 11:17 after the *Shema'*. As Maimonides decreed for the Jews of Egypt, I would have the Standing Prayer said only once, aloud. Every biblical text that is more than one or two verses long would be chanted, like the Torah and the Prophetical lessons and the Megillot. (The prayer book includes many psalms, but I have yet to hear one chanted that way.) I would have the musical emphasis that is given to a prayer, or even a phrase, correspond to the doctrinal or liturgical emphasis it ought to have. I do not pray for the restoration of the sacrificial cultus, nor does the prayer book I use (on the Sabbath) include a prayer for it; and the Conservative theologians who edited that *siddur* even refrained from translating the biblical prescription for animal sacrifice incorporated in the Standing Prayer for *Musaf*. Yet the congregation is encouraged to sing that very passage, in an almost fondling sort of way: "And on the Sabbath day, two he-lambs. . . ."

The Sabbath service is on the long side: in my congregation three hours—not unusual—and in another I know of, four. The other is the Orthodox synagogue of Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. It may be that the four-hour Sabbath worship is one of the reasons why the Sons and Daughters stay away from their synagogue so religiously.

The length of the synagogue service, on the Sabbath and festivals and even weekday mornings, is only a sign of the contradiction or tension in our worship. On the one hand, the Rabbis enjoin us not to make a perfunctory routine, *qeva'*, of our prayer. On the other hand, our liturgy consists, with some expansions and additions, of prayer-texts that the same Rabbis declared to be *ḥovah*, obligatory. It is hard to keep the repeated and obligatory from becoming routine. Even in the age of faith only a small elite could have succeeded.

But to make the service short will not help us much. I have felt most untouched and unmoved in short services, Reform or near-Reform Conservative or Reconstructionist; and my neighbors have seemed to me equally untouched and unmoved. In fact, length has certain advantages. In a way a long service is like a long poem. You do not want unrelieved concentration and tightness

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in a long poem; they would be intolerable. Length requires *longueurs*. A good long poem is an alternation of high moments and moments less high, of concentration and relaxation. In our synagogues the heights may not be very high, but the long service does provide some ascent and descent. The short service tends to be of a piece, dull and tepid.

If I shortened at all, it would be at the end rather than the beginning—the *Musaf*, not the introductory hymns and psalms. Time would also be saved by a total ban on bar-mitzvahs (let them go somewhere else), but twenty minutes or so would continue to be reserved for the sermon. The sermon would not be consistently topical, because I can acquire on my own the approved attitudes toward whatever the approved topics may be at any given time, from the approved sources: New York *Times Magazine, Saturday Review*, public-service television. It is less easy to acquire Torah.

My most reactionary radicalism would be reserved for the Friday-night service: back to Orthodoxy, almost all the way. Almost—because I would substitute some other reading from rabbinical literature for *Ba-meh madliqin*, which, besides being boring, is offensive in the reasons it gives for women dying in childbirth. Job should forever have put an end to that kind of theodicy.

How to recruit a good congregation of respectable size is a problem I am unable to solve even in a daydream. A bare *minyan* is not quite right for a Sabbath, let alone Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur. "In a multitude of people is the glory of a king." For the Rabbis that verse from Proverbs proved that Jews should worship together, the more the better. A large number of worshipping Jews assembled together can generate a kind of heat—analogous to the physical heat that people generate when they are closely assembled—that will affect each one individually. I have heard about it but I have not experienced it. On Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur a large number of Jews are assembled where I go, only most of them are not what anyone would call worshipping Jews. They are there, they bring their warm bodies, but they are a kind of inert mass and they deaden rather than quicken the worship. They are an audience—not an especially understanding one—rather than a congregation. According to Ninotchka, Stalin wanted fewer but better Russians. That is a cautionary precedent, but I would still be glad to exchange some Jewish quantity for quality.

Now, as to the prayer books I would use: something on the order of Birnbaum's excellent *siddur* and *maḥazor*, but different in having an English facing page that does not give the impression it was written by a hand in a woolen mitten. (For Ps. 24: 1, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," he has "The earth and its entire contents belong to the Lord.") Conservative variations should be presented, besides the Orthodox text. I would not particularly mind additional readings and meditations from modern work, provided they were additions not substitutions, and provided I could continue to ignore them. Either the modern lends itself with difficulty to what a prayer book should be or editors have usually made the wrong choices—probably both. A warning: if "insight" appears anywhere in the book—except perhaps in the introduction, and preferably not there, either—I will not buy it.

A good *siddur* is particularly useful during those necessary and soothing low-keyed stretches in the service. You may decide, for instance, to read a psalm or a rabbinical prayer more closely than you could if you were trying to keep up with the cantor and congregation. You can read for anything you wish—plain meaning, literary effect, doctrine, allusion or suggestion, historical placing, or even praise and supplication. If there are good notes and a good translation, you have most of the help you need.

For astigmatics like me, make sure the Hebrew characters are large and distinct, and more especially watch those vowel signs: I often have trouble telling a *qameẓ* from a *segol* or a *patah* from a *ẓere*. To Hebrew editors and printers everywhere I commend the example of David de Sola Pool in his edition of the Sephardi prayer book, who for short *qameẓ* uses the left-hand half of the sign. Unlike the Ashkenazi, the Sephardi-Israeli pronunciation distinguishes between long and short *qameẓ*, and a visual marking of the distinction is something to be grateful for. Without it, in hard or doubtful cases it becomes necessary to see whether the Kittel-Kahle Biblia Hebraica has a *meteg*, for example; and then what if the verse or word is not biblical? But even Dr. Pool is not to be completely relied on in these difficulties, because the Sephardi *siddur* is far from identical with the Ashkenazi. What is more, the Sephardim's tradition is unacceptable about such matters as the length of the *qameẓ* preceding *ḥaṭef-qameẓ*: for instance, instead of *ṭohorah*, "purity," they say *ṭahorah*, and Dr. Pool so points it.

My *siddur* would go to the Sephardim for variety, as in the Kaddish. The Kaddish is a doxology, of which the substantial and historical kernel is the congregation's response: "May His great name be blessed/praised (forever and ever)." Formally, it is not a prayer for the dead; only the graveside Kaddish mentions the dead, and then not specifically but generally, in its praise of God as the future author of resurrection. The four forms of the Kaddish said in the synagogue—two by the cantor or reader, two by mourners—are, as it were, punctuation marks in the service, setting off one part from the next. As far as "may He establish His kingdom" the Ashkenazi Kaddish is the same as the Sephardi one; but then the Seph-

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ardim (and Hasidim) add, ". . . causing His salvation to spring forth and bringing near [hastening the advent of] His Messiah." Why not take that over into, say, the reader's Kaddish *Titqabbal* or the mourner's Scholars' Kaddish? It would make somewhat more explicit the messianic hope that the Kaddish has expressed from the beginning.

In the *Kedushah,* with the reader repeating the Standing Prayer and reader and congregation saying a doxology built around "Holy, holy, holy," there are slight differences between the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi-Hasidic texts. Every now and then we might want to follow the Sephardi usage, and the *siddur* ought to have it for us. In the *'Alenu* we should take from the Sephardim the passage that the Christian censors deleted from our text.

THE STORY is told about a Hasid—the same story in its essentials no doubt exists in other religious traditions, too—that people complained of his frequent absence from the synagogue. "I start to go," he told them, "but when I leave the house I see God's world testifying to the majesty of Him who in His goodness renews every day, continually, the work of creation. So I recite some psalms, like 'The heavens declare the glory of God,/and the firmament proclaims his handiwork' and 'How great are Thy works, O LORD!/Thy thoughts are very deep!' And then, by the time I remember where I am and where I was going, it's too late, and I don't get to shul. But," he said, brightening, "sometimes I don't get distracted by thinking about God, and then I go."

Does the moral apply to us? Of course, but not entirely. We are different from that Hasid. We do not bless the Creator for His creation, because we have learned that the argument from design is a fallacy. Both for him and for us the synagogue is a distraction, but for us the distraction is unlikely to be from thinking about God.

Another story about Hasidim: In the presence of their sleeping master, two disciples were talking low about how hard it was to resist temptation, and how the *yezer ha-ra'*, the Evil Desire, kept running after them. Their master, who had not been asleep after all, opened his eyes and said: "Don't flatter yourselves. The Evil Desire isn't running after you, you haven't reached that height. You're still running after the Evil Desire."

Even when a man has arrived at a high degree of spirituality, we are informed, he has problems. I suppose an analogy might be with the rich, who have problems that the poor are either ignorant or skeptical about, and certainly in no position to complain about. The frail spirituality of the synagogue must be a real problem—for the spiritually rich. Who will believe us, paupers and groundlings, if we pretend that it is our problem and that we have reached that height?

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A WASHINGTON COMMENTARY

The U.S. Economy—1966

OSCAR GASS

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so. . . ."—Jeremiah 5:31

THE beginning of the understanding of the American economy during 1966 lies in the clear perception that nothing fundamental in this economy is made what it is by the war in Vietnam. Whoever says that, but for Vietnam, the U.S. would be doing this or that great thing, speaks either without knowledge or falsely.

Morally and politically, Vietnam counts for much. The appraisal of the American role in Asia opens a great trial of minds and characters—here uncovering differences, there cementing friendships. But even morally and politically, Vietnam neither distracts strong minds nor produces anything new. The heads supposedly too concentrated on Vietnam to think also of other things were always empty. The personalities ostensibly exhausted by this one moral imperative were always sapless.

In economic policy, the cost of Vietnam changes nothing important; it merely accelerates a little. A high estimate of U.S. government expenditure attributable to Vietnam, for the calendar year 1966, might approach $12 billion. Even this amounts to no more than the *increase* during three or four months in the annual level of American national product. A cost of this size is not of such weight as to determine any serious person, in American public life, to desist from doing or advocating anything of great moment which he would have done or advocated had there been no Vietnam war.

Indeed, the whole of U.S. military expenditure, at the present level, constitutes only a marginal drain on the capacity of American society to be as "Great" or as good as this society otherwise has the intellectual, moral, and political resources to be. In 1965-66, hardly 8% of the Gross National Product of the U.S. will be spent for military purposes. After deducting this 8%—or even three times 8%—the United States would still be richer, per capita, than any other society in human experience. By what idiocy are Americans to be found contending that a "Great" society is unattainable without that further increment of income which no other human community has ever had?

II

AT THE turn of the years 1965-66, the Gross National Product of the U.S. was at an annual level near $705 billion. I guess that, measured in the same prices, and provided that there is meanwhile no serious additional fiscal or monetary restraint of demand, the GNP is likely to stand near $745 billion at the opening of 1967. The rise in the general price level, from the fourth quarter of 1964 to the fourth quarter of 1965, was under 2%. I find, on balance, no reason to conclude that prices will rise faster in 1966. I therefore guess that, in the prices which will actually prevail, GNP will be about $730 billion in 1966. If expansion later continued at the same rate, GNP would be in the range of $760 billion for the federal fiscal year 1967 (July 1, 1966 through June 30, 1967).

1966 is a year of sharpened conflict between those whose accent is on price stability and those whose emphasis is on full employment. Only in a limited degree is this a division of judgments concerning uncertain issues of economic fact, relationship, and probability. It is, more largely, a conflict of economic interests, of moral sympathies, and of corresponding affiliations of politics.

Price stability is of most immediate benefit to those who receive contractually fixed incomes or those whose incomes are "sticky"—hard to change. Stability therefore attracts rentiers rather than entrepreneurs, recipients of fixed interests rather than of variable profits. In this connection, it is important for the mental climate of American society that, in the past two decades, interest has been its most rapidly expanding form of earned income. While GNP tripled, personal interest income from all sources (savings, bonds, etc.) sextupled. In 1965, the interest income received by individuals, $37.1 billion, was nearly twice as great as the $18.9 billion of personal income from dividends. Indeed personal interest income was almost as great as all dividend income *plus* the $18.6 billion of rents received by individuals (which includes all the "imputed" rents from owner-occupied housing).

In general, the propertied and the holders of secure employments are little sympathetic to even a marginal sacrifice of price stability

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in exchange for expansion. *They* do not need those last few million jobs. And those who have property and employment security are characteristically, in our American society, also profoundly convinced that the last increments of expansion and employment are basically unhealthy—a kind of intoxicant which loosens the bonds of society. Do not the poor then get too "uppity"? And is it a stable society in which even the shiftless and improvident can have a job, for the asking?

ON AN unexcited view of the prospects of the U.S. economy, there is, in my judgment, not likely to be need for additional taxes, to restrain demand, before the middle of 1967—if then. Indeed, though this judgment involves great uncertainty, I think it more likely that it will be necessary to stimulate private demand in 1967 than to restrain it. Nevertheless, I would agree that, by mid-1967, if unemployment were then down to about 2½%, a small increase in taxes might be in order. This small increase would have two purposes: first, to permit a continued expansion of federal expenditure, faster than could be financed by the already huge federal tax accrual through growth—if such expenditure were planned; second, to signal a willingness to restrain private demand further—if such restraint should later become necessary. But, at present, all of Washington's resources of intelligence and character need, I believe, to be concentrated in the opposite direction. Washington needs to strengthen its present resolve to remain unaffected by the hypertension in which many American bankers and financial editors live at all times (symptoms: constant nightmares of runaway inflation).

Of all developed countries, the U.S. has, in recent years, maintained the greatest general price stability.* From 1958 to 1965, U.S. wholesale prices rose only 2%, export prices 6%, the cost of living 9%. Only for the single year 1965 can American preeminence in price stability be put in question. And even in 1965, such countries as the United Kingdom, West Germany, and Sweden, while achieving less economic growth than the U.S., experienced greater price advances.

For stability of consumer prices, the U.S. is clearly foremost. While U.S. consumer prices rose 9% in 1958-65, the German rise was 19%, British 21%, Swedish 27%, and Japanese 41%. True, U.S. consumer prices did rise by 2% in the single year from December 1964 through December 1965. Still, 2% is hardly an explosion.

But it is the movement of the U.S. wholesale price index which has recently been made the occasion of panic by the financial editors. From 1958 through 1964, this index hardly budged. (Meanwhile wholesale prices had risen only 3% and 4% in Japan and Germany, but 15% in Sweden and 19% in France.) Then, in the twelve months, December 1964 to December 1965, the long-desired rise in the prices of American farm products at last arrived—11.1% in one year! Farm income increased by $2.1 billion. But prices of all commodities other than farm and processed food rose only 1.4% in the year. And during the most recent months, while the financial editors have most insistently cried havoc, the index of all industrial commodities, based on 1957-59 equals 100, has moved up only from 103.2 in November 1965 to 103.5 on February 19, 1966. What an irony if, having at last managed a rise in farm prices, the U.S. were to heat itself into a panic over a supposed inflation represented by this belated success in farm price policy!

IN NO other developed country would the level of employment which now prevails in the United States be called "full." Still, in the past two decades, the U.S. has had higher levels of employment than are likely in 1966 only during the Korean war years 1951-53.

For 1965, the labor force averaged 78.4 million. The unemployed were 3.5 million, and those who worked part-time though desiring full-time jobs were another 1.9 million. Civilian employment, full-time and part-time, stood at 72.2 million; it had risen 1,822,000 above 1964. The armed forces averaged a trifle *smaller* in 1965 than in 1964—2,722,000 instead of 2,738,000. At the turn of 1965-66, civilian employment was increasing faster than it had in 1964-65.

During 1966, the labor force will probably average over 80 million. Military employment is likely to be about 300,000 above 1965. And, unless there are new and serious restraints on demand, civilian employment may well increase by more than in 1965—say by 2,000,000, or even a bit more. Unemployment would then average about 2.8 million—3½% of the whole labor force. By the end of the year, unemployment might even get down to 3%. There is nothing in this image of 1966 that can fairly be called full employment. But it would be near enough to full employment to be mistaken for the reality by poor eyes.

There are, however, sensible reasons why one may, in the United States, regard unemployment if not of 3½%, then perhaps in the range of 2½%, as approaching the "full" mark. *First*: there are extraordinary American patterns of job changing. In U.S. manufacturing, it is consistently necessary to engage about four workers for each hundred employed, *every month*, just to keep the labor force constant! Some of the 4% who have quit or been laid off will be recorded as unemployed even if they find other jobs within ten days. In January 1966, some 52% of the unemployed had

* There is a convenient assembly of indices of wholesale and consumer prices in the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* of the United Nations, New York. A similar service for export and import prices is performed monthly by the *International Financial Statistics* of the International Monetary Fund, Washington.

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been out of work less than five weeks. *Second*: there is much unavoidable seasonal unemployment in a country with so great a climatic range. In 1965, U.S. agriculture employed 5,626,000 people in July, and only 3,645,000 in December; construction employed 2,713,000 in February, and 3,575,000 in August. *Third*: the very growth in the American labor force creates transitional unemployment on a scale without parallel in countries where total employment grows very slowly (as, for example, in the United Kingdom). In the decade 1960-70, the U.S. labor force will probably grow by about 14,000,000, if high employment opportunity is sustained.

For these reasons, U.S. unemployment of 1½- to 2 million persons need not involve unconscionable hardship or great inefficiency—on two conditions. First, that the unemployed receive adequate compensation; second, that few persons remain long unemployed. In this second connection, it is encouraging that, in the fourth quarter of 1965, people unemployed for 15 weeks or longer were down to 667,000. In 1961, these long-term unemployed numbered 1,532,000; in 1953, they were only 211,000. At something close to 200,000, in a labor force of 80,000,000, long-term unemployment might perhaps be regarded as not constituting a major social problem.

III

As compared to the fiscal year which ended on June 3, 1965, the federal budget proposals for fiscal 1967 reflect two great changes.* First, some $10.5 billion of prospective expenditure is specifically identified as due to Vietnam. Second, expenditure for Great Society objects (health, education, labor, welfare, housing, and community development) is to rise by $13.6 billion. These two categories add up to the whole budgeted spending increase.

During the calendar years 1964 and 1965, President Johnson carried out policies which decreased the share of the federal public sector in the national economy. Private demand was counted on for economic expansion, and this demand was stimulated by some $20 billion of annual tax reductions. The budget for the fiscal year 1967—particularly its trust account section—in part reverses this 1964-65 pattern. The sources of the reversal are Vietnam and the Great Society, taken together.

In the calendar years 1961-63, when Kennedy bore executive responsibility, federal administrative budget expenditure averaged 16.2% of GNP. The combined share of administrative and trust expenditures, in the national product accounts, averaged 19.5%. With 16.2%, Johnson's administrative budget spending in the calendar year 1965 would have been $109.6 billion; actually it was $101.4 billion. With 19.5%, total federal participation in the national product accounts would have been $131.9 billion; actually, it was $123.3 billion. The consistent difference of about $8½ billion measures the amount by which the relative weight of the federal public sector was contracted in the shift from New Frontier to Great Society.

Under the budget for fiscal 1967, administrative budget spending would rise by $11.4 billion and total federal national product spending by $18.7 billion. These are 18-month changes—from actual calendar 1965 to proposed fiscal 1967. My calculations suggest that these 1967 spending levels would widen the gap from the Kennedy pattern regarding the administrative budget to about $10 billion, but simultaneously narrow the gap in total federal participation to about $6 billion.

The meaning of this divergence is straightforward. Vietnam (which is in the administrative budget) is less weighty than the Great Society programs (which are financed about 70% from the trust funds). In 1961-63, defense spending came to 9% of GNP; the $61.4 billion budgeted for defense in fiscal 1967 will be a little over 8%. Defense, including Vietnam, is not in a new economic dimension. On the other hand, federal expenditure for the Great Society programs is acquiring a weight of which there is no previous experience in the American economy.

In my judgment, the stimulus to economic expansion reflected in the federal budget for fiscal 1967 may well have passed its peak by the time this essay is printed—three months before that fiscal year opens. This is transparently true for the stimulus from defense spending. The calendar year 1965 total of defense spending was about $53 billion. The budgeted total for fiscal 1967 is $61.4 billion. But the revised defense budget total for fiscal 1966 is also $57.5 billion, and only about $27 billion was spent in its first six months. This means that the budgeted rate of defense spending for the six months January through June 1966 is about $30.5 billion—almost exactly half the budget of $61.4 billion of the subsequent twelve months. Moreover, defense spending provides economic stimulus not entirely when money is paid out but also, in part, earlier—when orders are placed and materials are assembled. For this reason, it seems clear that the defense stimulus to the economy, at the level provided for in the budget for fiscal 1967, will have passed its peak when the April issue of COMMENTARY is in the hands of readers.

Moreover, the Great Society programs will not provide a net general economic stimulus in the

* The basic documents are *The Budget Of The United States Government . . . 1967*, together with its *Appendix* volume and its volume of *Special Analyses*. The *Annual Report* of the Council of Economic Advisers contains a convenient compendium of statistics, some useful analysis, and a heavy—perhaps unavoidable—component of official eyewash. All these are Government Printing Office issues of January 1966.

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new fiscal year. The one-year rise in expenditure on these programs is to be $2.1 billion in the administrative budget and $3.7 billion in the trust funds. But total administrative budget expenditure, apart from Vietnam, is to rise by only $0.6 billion; in that budget, Great Society expenditure is therefore to be primarily a substitute for other spending. And, in the trust funds, Great Society spending of $3.7 billion is heavily overmatched by $5.5 billion of additional employment tax receipts. (A major increase in payroll tax rates on January 1, 1966 is to be followed by another increase on January 1, 1967.)

On balance, I suspect, by mid-year 1966, the federal budget will be affording no significant general stimulus to further economic expansion. In the federal government, both the general interest in further employment and specific desires to accomplish particular programs will have ceded priority to concern for price stability. Then the further rise in U.S. economic activity will be dependent either on additional growth of private investment and of net exports or on some autonomous increase in consumption. Fortunately, for the present, private fixed investment (other than in housing) is continuing to rise steeply—perhaps at an annual rate in the range of $10 billion. From a sanguine point of view, it is therefore still possible to regard the federal budget of fiscal 1967 as standing aside to make way for this rise in private investment.

IV

THE financial climate of opinion in the United States, at the end of February 1966, is severely agitated. The distinctly financial precipitant of this agitation was the action of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, effective in New York on December 6, 1965, raising the rediscount rate (charged by the Federal Reserve System for credit to its member banks) from 4% to 4½%. While raising its price, the Board announced that it would not curtail quantity: "The action contemplates the continued provision of additional reserves to the banking system, in amounts sufficient to meet . . . the credit needs of an expanding economy . . ."*

This action of the Board of Governors, raising its price by 12½%, constituted a signal to all commercial banks to raise the price of the service they supply—the use of money—in like proportion. The banks were quick to comply. At the same time, the Board continued to provide more reserves. It thereby permitted the volume of bank lending to expand steadily. Commercial bank credit (seasonally adjusted) rose by $2.5 billion in December and $3.0 billion in January. In the week ending February 16, 1966, the adjusted volume of loans and investments of weekly reporting member banks was 8.3% higher than a year earlier. Under Board of Governors' auspices, the banks had received official approval to do a larger volume of business, at a greatly higher price. (As bank credit is now about $300 billion, a one-half per cent rise in interest charges increases bank gross income by $1.5 billion!) Steel manufacturers and bricklayers could wish themselves similarly sponsored.

In less than three months after the Board of Governors' price increase, the yield on 90-day Treasury obligations rose by ½% and on one-year obligations by ¾%. (On February 25, 1966, these stood at 4.69% and 5.18%.) In the same short period, a representative 21-year Treasury bond lost $5 out of each $100 in capital value. The tax-exempt bond market was least disturbed; its yields (as measured by Moody's long-term composite) rose only from 3.52% to 3.80%. But even the tax-exempt market had become so jittery—because of rumors of a still higher discount rate—that the sober Moody's Investor Service found itself devoid of counsel:

> We find it impossible to evaluate the attractiveness of reoffering yields due to the precipitous, continuing, downward movement in market levels that affords an insecure base upon which to make comparisons.†

At the end of February, representative yields for utility and industrial bonds were going up to the levels of 1932. Yet the volume of new corporate borrowings was greatly above 1965—and rising.

UNDER current conditions, a rise of 12½% in the price for the use of money operates, very largely, like any other 12½% price rise. For the most part, the same economic activities go on as before the price increase. But now these activities cost more. Those weak (tested in dollars) who cannot afford the price—and have a choice—desist. Those strong who can—because they are appropriately situated—pass it on. Incomes are, in some degree, shifted and, in general, inflated. A rise in the cost of money is unique, if at all, only in the wide diffusion of its effects.

If a rise in interest rates is to have its much-advertised restraining effect, somebody important must be restrained. Some important borrower must be caused to reduce his demand for real resources—labor, materials, finished products, or plant capacity. But our major borrowers are not such people as can be brought, under present economic conditions, to reduce their demands by those rises in interest rates we have experienced or are likely to experience. I cite six groups of such relatively impervious borrowers.

First: the U.S. government. The Treasury ex-

* The formal statements of the Board and of President Johnson are printed textually in the New York *Times* of December 6, 1965, and will bear close reading.

† Quotation from *Moody's Bond Survey*, issue of February 21, 1966, page 793. The identical message was repeated in the issue of February 28, page 777, in an article entitled "Tax-Exempts: A Crazy Quilt Market."

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pects to pay about $800 million more interest next year than this year. But the growth in interest payable will (rightly) be the least consideration in determining the size of any federal program—civil or military. *Second*: states and municipalities. Their annual budgets have now passed $80 billion. Even in the relatively cheap tax-exempt market, higher interest may cost them about $50 million this year. But their new borrowing is little influenced by changes in interest rates: they tax and pay. *Third*: public utilities. Their borrowing grows with their facilities. And they are not inhibited by higher interest rates: everywhere they are authorized by law to pass on their cost of money to the consumers. *Fourth*: profitable industrial corporations. Their internal rate of discount is greatly higher than market interest rates: they will almost never invest equity money unless it looks like earning over 10% after depreciation and after taxes. But even a 6% market interest charge—when interest is deductible as a cost and when there is a corporate income tax rate of 48%—means to them a net cost of only 3.12%. Such a cost does not restrain demand. *Fifth*: the speculator. He looks for a price rise of 1% in a day, a week, or a month. So long as he believes in the rise, he is not restrained by the addition of 1% or 2% *per year* to interest charges. *Sixth*: the installment buyer. Last year he added $9 billion to his debts. But he pays 1% or more per month—and does not know how much he is paying. He is not to be restrained through the cost of credit.

Where the rise in interest rates does perhaps restrain is in the largest debt projects of families of modest income. For half of our families, we have to reckon with cash resources under $140 a week. There an additional charge of $5 or $10 a week may preclude. These are the calculations involved in the purchases of simple houses. Both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations announced their concern to stimulate house construction. And both were generally successful—if that be success—in keeping interest rates on first mortgages in the range of 6%. Still the number of houses built in 1965 was less than in 1964 or 1963—or 1955. And perhaps the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System would not have found it dignified to say that the Board was trying to restrain inflation by discouraging the poor from buying houses.

All else failing, it used to be fashionable to assert that raising U.S. interest rates would at least help to window-dress the international balance of payments. But bankers who watch the facts (among them notably Mr. J. L. Robertson of the Board of Governors) have recently testified repeatedly that U.S. interest-rate increases merely push up foreign rates, without narrowing the differentials. Moreover, the best-disciplined part of the voluntary control over the flow of U.S. funds abroad has been precisely this sector of short-term banking credits. U.S. banks were fully as cooperative, in abstaining from increasing their foreign loans, before December 6, 1965 as after.

The Johnson executive family was aware of the unstabilizing possibilities of an officially authorized shift to higher interest prices. Before December 6, several high executive officers made a concerted effort to scare the event off. After the action, the President expressed regret. But the regret was quickly muffled. And soon observers in Washington were allowed to believe that the difference had never concerned anything but "timing." Johnson, like Kennedy, thought unwise a direct clash with the men of money, a clash that might raise those frightening images of monetary unsoundness before which otherwise strong hearts quail. The President accordingly went along with the ideology which finds the Board of Governors an authority independent of the President. Franklin Roosevelt would never have accepted such a doctrine; Marriner Eccles would not have claimed it. And I have never known a sophisticated and independent lawyer in Washington who appraised this ideology more highly than being, at best, dubious constitutional law.

The Board of Governors is not, in its central function, a judicial body, and it accordingly lacks the high claim to independence of a body which adjudicates particular rights and interests. Under the Constitution, the Congress has the power to make laws concerning money. But the Constitution does not permit any authority—even the Congress—to fragmentize the responsibility of the President for the execution of the laws. (The Supreme Court, accordingly, found that the Congress could not make the head of TVA independent of the President—and irremovable by him—even if it wished to do so.) It is at least doubtful constitutionally whether any executive Board of the U.S. government has the right, in law, to carry out persistently an economic policy in conflict with the President's policy.

I doubt that President Johnson did a service to the office of the Presidency, and to the processes of American government, when he stated, on December 5, 1965:

> The Federal Reserve Board is an independent agency. Its decision was an independent decision.

But, when the President of the United States makes such a statement, he shifts the constitutional position. The statement tends to make itself true.

V

EARLY IN 1966, when employment is seasonally low, the United States still has about 3¼ million people totally unemployed. Over 2 million other people are working part-time because they cannot find full-time jobs. The

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unemployed get little help from public authority. In the representative week of 1965, only 42 persons out of every 100 unemployed were receiving insurance compensation. Those compensated got an average of about $37 a week. Specifically to the poor, the unemployment compensation bill (HR 8282) now pending in Congress would probably mean more than any piece of legislation which the Johnson administration has actually enacted. Perhaps just for this reason, the unemployment compensation legislation does not move forward. President Johnson introduced it belatedly in 1965, and he has not pressed it. The trade-union movement failed to give it first priority. The neglected unemployed are still very much with us.

Yet the war in Vietnam and the demand management of the Great Society have brought the United States, for the first time since 1953, within sight of the threshold of the economic universe in which other developed countries have been living throughout these thirteen years. This is a universe of full employment, in which not only for private persons but also for national societies—things have real costs. Here it is no longer socially possible to have more of everything, at the sole sacrifice of involuntary idleness.

Within the limits of my acquaintance, I see this movement of the American people from one economic universe toward another as accompanied by considerable giddiness. But there are profound differences. For example, in these economic matters, as in the issues relating to Vietnam, I find Washington far more sober than New York—better informed first, but also more thoughtful, more consequential in analysis, less inclined to seek release in self-indulgent and irresponsible rhetoric. And, so far as my information extends, the contrast between Washington and New York parallels also, in some degree, a difference between Washington and the universities. (How disappointing that the dwellers in bureaucratic darkness should compare so favorably with the academic children of light!) The Sunday newspaper brings me, from the academy:

> . . . the time has come for a change. President Johnson should bring in a tax program before mid-year. Congress should pass that program speedily. . . . The issue is no longer growth versus stagnation. It is maintainable long-term growth versus frenzied and self-defeating scrambling for limited resources.*

For the present, Washington is less taken by frenzy than the above, and the United States is, I believe, fortunate in the difference.

* Professor Paul A. Samuelson, "Boiling Economy Needs Tax Damper," in the Washington *Post* of February 27, 1966.

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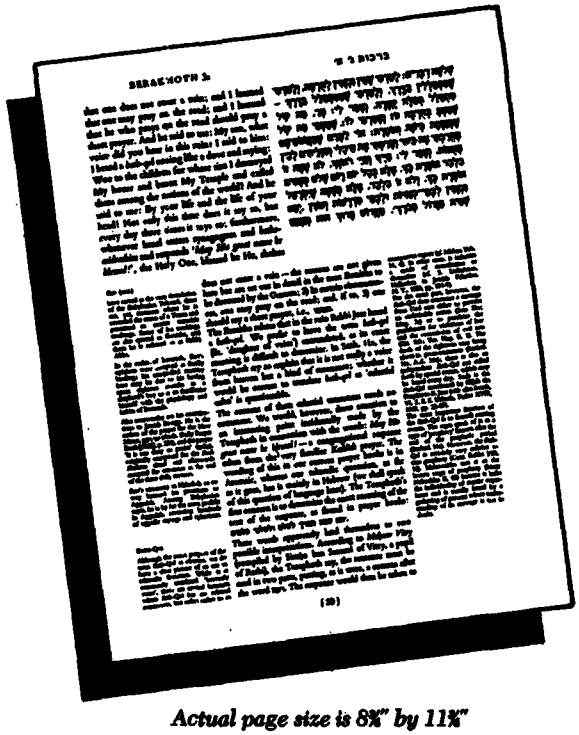

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DOUBLE FEATURE

Warren Coffey

If you get through the first ninety seconds of the British *Othello*, you can probably hold out the whole way. It opens about like this (I am sure of everything but the B.R.E. part):

B.R.E. presents
LAURENCE OLIVIER
in *Othello* by William Shakespeare.

God, the vanity of these actors! It seems to me that there were some more credits after that, and I know a bell started tolling pretty soon, a bit portentously Westminster Abbey, it seemed to me. Things got notably better after it stopped, but the movie, which had fine, even brilliant, moments, and one great moment, came out on the whole a disappointment, the weakest, I should say, of the Shakespeare movies that Sir Laurence Olivier has done. The reasons for this have to do, some of them, with Sir Laurence Olivier, some with official English culture, some with Shakespeare, and some, finally, with our inclement time.

Sir Laurence Olivier is a masterful actor, maybe even a great one. He does Othello with a rumbling *basso* and a rolling slouch and a trick of the nether lip and a clucking of teeth and rolling of palms that make in the sum as strong a physical Othello as anybody could imagine or the heart could wish. But for most of the way that is as far as he gets into Othello. It is as though he were trying to establish that Sir Laurence Olivier, who has vaulted into a saddle and whipped the French at Agincourt, and bleached his hair and been a royal prince of Danes, and clapped a hump on his back and been a Machiavel and done villainous dark things up and down England, could play when he chose a bloody wog, and play him round. Now there goes, I am sure, a certain simple-mindedness and vanity into the making of an actor, as there goes, I think, a certain simple-mindedness and vanity into the making of a poet. William Yeats, for example, wore excessively bardic neckties and fluttered the hen-coop a good deal and wrote essays that whirred along and regularly blurred the most simple ideas. And yet when Yeats wrote poetry, the trappings of personality disappeared, and the thinking became quite brilliant: "Locke sank into a swoon;/ The garden died./ God took the spinning-jenny/ Out of his side." The exact point about Sir Laurence Olivier is that *as an actor* he appears to be simple-minded and, at least in this outing, vain: that is, for all his fine physical plant and all his training and experience and his wonderful discipline of voice and body, he cannot get very far intellectually into the Shakespeare characters. The other Shakespeare he has done for the movies bears this out, I think: a Henry V of straight heroics and patriotics, done without any shading of the ruthlessness that Shakespeare put into the character, done seemingly without any awareness that the ruthlessness is there; a Hamlet played to the schoolboy thesis that this is the story of a man who cannot make up his mind; and a Richard III played brilliantly, indeed unexceptionably, but then Richard III, as the straight Machiavel, hardly makes great intellectual demands. Nor does Macheath in John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, to a movie version of which Sir Laurence Olivier contributed a wonderfully broad comic performance. All in all, I think it a fair inference that he is likely to excel in something like inverse proportion to the intellectual demands made on him. And Othello makes large demands. For if he does not have an analytic mind, he has a powerful imaginative apprehension of experience and of states of soul, "of anters vast and deserts idle," that finds voice in some of the richest and most exotic of Shakespeare's dramatic verse. Sir Laurence Olivier has two ways of dealing with this verse. The first (or LAURENCE OLIVIER-in-*Othello*-by-William-Shakespeare-way) is to bang it out so fast and with such a violence of movement and gesture that the spectator can catch only an occasional lucid phrase and begins to imagine he is touring Westminster Abbey with a guide who has a tic, and a ring in his nose. But at least this way has fire and wildness, and it's much preferable to the second, or E. M. Forster way: "throwing away" the big set speeches offhandedly, which is all right if you drink ovaltine and read E. M. Forster. But it isn't Shakespeare. And I think it is a great pity that so many of the English players have got into this habit of "throwing away" verse. (Richard Burton reads it better than any of them, roundly and without embarrassment, and without, I might add, any of that cult Welshness we've had so much of since Dylan Thomas, all those "wild valley babblers" Kingsley Amis has written about.)

Having been long about the failings of Sir Laurence Olivier in this *Othello*, I want to add that he creates the one great moment it has, a still-shot, an affair of thirty seconds or so, when the camera watches his Othello learn that Iago has lied and lied the whole time and Desdemona is dead thereby. I would not have believed an actor could have managed this, to make of his body the epicenter of the play and show the cracks going out, brain and heart and nerve and all. It is a great and a notably restrained moment of acting. With more like it, we might have had a great *Othello*. Without it, we might have had the "bloody farce" that Thomas Rymer long ago so cantankerously dismissed, a spectacle without meaning. (Rymer thought the play had no meaning because Shakespeare had violated decorum and hence truth in making Iago a liar. He thought soldiers should always be plain, honest fellows as they were in the classical plays. Othello comes to grief, ironically enough, because he believes as a man what Rymer only believed as a critic of plays.)

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Perhaps the final measure of the kind of badness in the *Othello* of Sir Laurence Olivier is that it can make one think that old Thomas Rymer, that most wrongheaded and pedantic of all critics, might have had hold of something after all. But this kind of thing always happens when actors get out of hand.

THIS *Othello* is a near-straight filming of a stage performance by the National Theatre of Great Britain. As such, it has a good deal of that "hundred per cent wool" quality—to use a phrase of the late Edith Sitwell—that besets most official English culture. It is a "hundred per cent wool" *Othello* altogether. The English, more than most Western nations, try to make institutions of their writers and artists, to make them represent the nation, like British woolens or Commander Whitehead. This is why they produce in every generation officially "serious" novelists like Galsworthy and like C. P. Snow—and *oú sont les neiges d'antan?*—great, well-intentioned English heavyweights who fuss about serious topical questions and know what the Ministry are thinking and write very ponderously, the more ponderously the better even, because that is the English way after all and art may be left to the French and the Italians, who are all very good at that sort of thing anyway. At most times, the important English artists may be recognized by the mocking distance they keep from this official culture: Evelyn Waugh, for example, among older writers and Kingsley Amis and Thom Gunn among the younger ones, and among actors, Richard Burton and Peter Sellers. Ludwig Wittgenstein, who lived a good part of his life among the English, used to be enraged by their notion, still widespread, that the English *had a way* with movies, particularly with sophisticated comedy. He preferred Carmen Miranda. And to "serious" English novelists, he preferred the Street and Smith detective magazines. On the whole, I think he was right.

The assumptions of official English culture turn up in a number of ways in this version of *Othello*, first and most patronizingly in the notion that the way to make a movie of *Othello* is surely to turn the cameras on an actual stage performance by the National Theatre of Great Britain. Even if the presently-received English way of doing Shakespeare, half academic pageant and half well-made play, were better than it is, this would be a questionable way of proceeding. Its great merit, of course, is assuring that nobody will have to take any risks or exhibit any imagination by cutting undramatic speeches (most of Act II, Scene 1, for example, which moves the action from Venice to Cyprus and produces a full fifteen minutes in this movie of tugging and hauling and arm-waving and rant) or by stylizing parts of the action that do not lend themselves to straight realism (Iago's stabbing Cassio in the *leg* as a means of killing him). Samuel Johnson pointed out long ago that Shakespeare at narration "affects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words, which might have been more plainly delivered in a few." With any boldness at all, a good deal of this could be cut away. And by stylizing production, one could arrive at something at once closer to Shakespeare and better adapted to the screen. For there is something very questionably operatic, at least if it is a realistic, wide-screen, color movie you are making, in having Desdemona smothered with a pillow and then throttled, only to revive some minutes later and speak four more lines before dying. The pathos of the scene might well carry the bad physiology of this in a more stylized production, but not here. And now a last note touching production—the unimaginative use of color. *Othello* has a grave and somber action, but the way to establish this is not, I think, by excluding pretty much everything south of brown. The one flash of color that seemed to me at all adventurous the whole way was a bit of business early in the movie involving Othello's toying with a rose, a dark rose at that. And why color for *Othello* anyway?

The kinds of badness I have been talking about are most satisfactorily explained on some such hypothesis as that of the baleful effect of the official English hand on all it touches. Nor is it possible to claim at this hour any particular novelty for the hypothesis. What is astonishing, though, is the way that official English culture continues to have its assumptions believed—that the English *have* a way with movies, that Commander Whitehead *is* a pattern of something, that though Galsworthy turned out to be not *all that much of* a novelist, C. P. Snow certainly is important, and so forth. Another of these assumptions, a better-based one on the whole, is that the English turn out excellent actors every generation because of their tradition of repertory companies. And more specifically, that English productions will have strong across-the-board casts because of the large numbers of excellent actors around, and the way the English have held out against the star system. I do not myself see how all this can outlive the present *Othello*, but it probably will. We may hope to have it expressed somewhat less often, though, and a couple of shades less brightly. There are certainly excellent actors here. Frank Finlay does a solid, virile, unexceptionable Iago. Robert Lang overcomes what I would have thought the impossible handicap of looking exactly like Henry Fielding to turn in a delightful Roderigo—a great simpering lout and gull. Joyce Redman, who was trained in the old Abbey Theatre, does a finely human Emilia—not an intellectual and not a stick of wood either, not a den-mother nor yet a trull. And there is an excellent Brabantio, all senatorial disdain and paternal wrath, done by an actor whose name I am sorry not to have caught. But the Desdemona and the Cassio are very feeble indeed. Maggie Smith is a strapping, red-and-cream girl who looks as though she might be keen on games. Her notion of the way to play a Venetian senator's daughter involved reading her lines very softly, which was all right, and very *county*, which was not, so that her Desdemona came out with less of electricity than of British woolen. The

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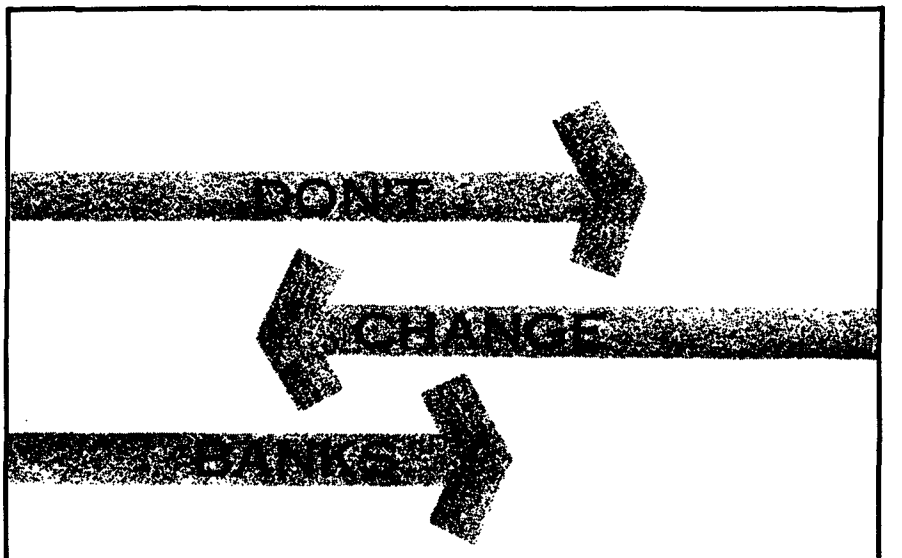
Cassio was done by a slight, tripping young man—again I must apologize for not having caught his name—with scraggly beard and a piping voice who did everything a boy could be asked to do at a man's job of work. Even a stronger *Othello* than this one could not have carried two such weak performances. And the fault is not in Shakespeare but in this production. A very knowing friend of mine, a man, like me, little disposed to look kindly on anything Soviet, has told me, what I am prepared to believe, that the Soviet *Othello* of a few years ago, which I did not see, is a more honest and a more powerful movie than this British one.

BACK TO John Locke now, who swooned more pages ago than is really convenient. But he did swoon and the garden died, and England has come to spinning jennies and, worse, has come to look most mornings like a depleted coal-pit ringed by the silver sea, the England of John Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. As a book, it was a great movie. My reservations about it were possibly more academic than real, having to do chiefly with a hunch that Le Carré, having taken over the seedy spy from Graham Greene, who had him in turn from Joseph Conrad, had made from these unlikely materials a new version of the Byronic hero—Alec Leamas's proud aloofness and defiance, his brooding guilt about dark, secret sins (Leamas's sins are dark doings in the *capa y espada* line rather than anything so aristocratic as Byron's incest), his sardonic humor about all romanticisms except his own, his idyll with a Haidee who works in a library, and so forth. Byronic heroes do not in general stand much looking into, but then neither does life, as Conrad himself tells us. And it certainly would be a mistake to saddle the movie version of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* with these reservations. It is a great movie, I think. I don't know when I've seen one as good.

The translation from book to movie, admittedly less demanding here than in many cases, was very nearly perfect. The one scene



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where it seemed to me notably less than that came when Richard Burton's Leamas was trying to establish with the East German agents, after his defection, his bitterness at having been let out by British Intelligence. The dialogue was so pared here from the longer conversations in the book that a kind of imbalance resulted and it seemed that Leamas was working three "Bloody sods!" into every sentence, in a way that even East German agents might penetrate. (The C.I.A. man in my row saw through it right away.) But aside from this, the intelligence and sense of craft that govern the whole production make one put aside his first thought—that a good book can still put the fear of God in producers—and conclude, instead, that where the movie departs from the book at all, it is generally for the better, and in ways that show a most admirable austerity and even daring in the producers. Thus, for example, they cut entirely the one bit of derring-do that Leamas had in the book, the killing of the East German guard with a karate blow, or whatever it was, and they very much shorten the idyll between Leamas and the girl, big chances both, as these things go at the best of times in the movies. The same austerity shows up in the spare handling of action and the swift, elliptical changes of scene—Berlin, an airport, a scream of engines, the dropping of a gangway, London—that cut away the occasional wooliness of the book. And the photography and lighting, affairs of black and gray—we never see the sun or full light and almost nothing of full white—catch finely the book in hand without ever becoming routine spy-thriller atmospherics.

OF THE actors, Richard Burton was poetry; the rest were prose, excellent prose. This turned out exactly the right way of managing things. While all the others were turning in highly professional jobs of reporting, Burton was conjuring up a Leamas of brains and whiskey and scorn, of nerves starting to go bad and fingers starting to bump together, and going to flesh and hating desks and paper and talk and pretty much everything else in the bloody universe except being good at a squalid job—a Leamas that improved every hint in Le Carré's book and took every nuance and gave it back roundly bodied in a sustained, triumphant job of acting. The other performances came, wisely, in a lower key. Almost everybody seemed to be well within his range and not straining after effect, so that the movie as a whole had a fine, even competence on the one hand and escaped slickness on the other because everybody involved obviously believed in what he was doing. Claire Bloom, as elegant a whir of atoms as any around when she chooses to be, managed to make her Liz a trifle dim-witted, even a touch adenoidal, but brought her off kind and very moving in the end, exactly the type of face occasionally to be glimpsed among the marchers filling the streets at all hours these days. Cyril Cusack gets off a very sharply observed Control—fussy, old-womanish, basically ruthless. Oskar Werner's version of Fiedler struck me as notably less successful, as having more of trappings than imagination. A tweed cap and a tweed jacket and horn-rimmed glasses and a turtle-neck sweater, black, of course, and a beard too, if I remember right, seemed the long way round of establishing Fiedler's brilliance. He seemed more academic than brilliant to me, but this is a small thing to complain of, and it has to be a strong cast in which Oskar Werner is going to be the weak man. Michael Hordern and Ann Blake contribute two sharply drawn satiric sketches: he of the pathetic jauntiness of the fag contact, Ashe, and she the crank and snob librarian, Miss Crail. Peter Van Eyck does an impressively restrained and sinister blond beast job with Mundt. All in all, it is as admirable a cast and as intelligently and firmly directed as any I can remember seeing.

WARREN COFFEY, *who contributed an essay on Flannery O'Connor to our November 1965 issue, will be writing regularly about the movies in these pages.* MR. COFFEY *teaches English at the University of San Francisco.*

TV CHRONICLE

Neil Compton

WHEN THE lavish tedium of this season's regular television schedules began to be apparent, optimists among the critics advised us to count on network specials for most of our "viewing pleasure" during 1965-66. Now that the season is approaching its close, perhaps we can consider whether this was good advice.

There has never been a more arid year for television drama of any kind. Apart from occasional imaginative productions on such first-rate Sunday-morning religious programs as *Lamp Unto My Feet* (CBS), anthology drama survives only on *Bob Hope Theater* (NBC), a series in which infantile scripts are given at best routinely competent production. The most ambitious non-musical dramatic specials have been two *Hall of Fame* productions (NBC): "Inherit the Wind" (18 November) with Ed Begley and Melvyn Douglas, and a re-run of last season's "The Magnificent Yankee" (3 February) with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, both produced by George Shaefer. These expressions of pious Americanism were worthy enough in themselves, but rather pathetic as tokens of commercial television's involvement in the arts. "Death of a Salesman," scheduled for April, will hardly change the image.

To be fair, the dearth of non-serial drama on television is a worldwide phenomenon, not peculiar to the United States. Perhaps it is naive to expect a medium which offers a service as domestic as a picture window and as continuous as running water (more so than New York water, in fact) to duplicate the conventional forms of theater and cinema, which are based on an audience which chooses freely among alternatives and commits time, energy, and money to the act of participation. The vast, unbuttoned universality of the television audience and the ritualistic repetitiveness of the weekly schedule mean that empathy is achieved, if at all, only after a half-dozen or more instalments of a series have established

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a cadre of habitual viewers. Why should any dramatist choose to write for such a medium so long as theater and movies are open to him? Almost without exception, the best television dramas have been adaptations of works originally conceived for other media: the tendency of popular TV programs generally to be "spin-offs" of movies, comic books, novels, or musical comedies is more than a matter of mere witless imitation.

Pay or subscription television may some day change this situation by helping to isolate meaningful audiences. In the meantime, we wait without excessive hope to see whether *The Plainsman*, a two-hour movie made expressly for showing on TV (CBS), will represent any kind of breakthrough.

The approach of Christmas was heralded by a spate of glossily banal special productions. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (CBS) was probably the best of the bunch, but Charles Schulz's chaste, economical draftsmanship, the excellent children's voices, and Vince Guraldi's crisp performance of his own score (for piano and rhythm) did not quite compensate for the predictable lapse into sentimentality at the end. The season of goodwill is all very well, but it would take the genius of a popular vulgarian like Dickens to carry off the reformation of Lucy Van Pelt.

AT FIRST glance, the year's crop of variety specials may seem to have been a rich one, ranging from frenetic (Sammy Davis on NBC) to lethargic (Perry Como, also on NBC), and from nostalgic (*The Wonderful World of Burlesque*, with Danny Thomas, NBC) to narcissistic (*My Name is Barbra*, a rerun of Barbra Streisand's triumphant exercise in self-absorption, CBS). In general, however, these productions suffer from similar defects—too many people perched on stools, too many duets of snatches from ancient hit songs, too many soft-shoe routines, and too many in-group show-biz jokes. (Who is Dean Martin, that his drinking habits should become a great American myth?) Yet after all objections have been made, the miscellaneous, discontinuous strip

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format of such programs is probably well adapted to both the strengths and limitations of the medium. Vaudeville and not the theater is the true parent of TV entertainment.

WHEN television sets out self-consciously to exploit or examine the myths it lives by, the result is seldom illuminating. *A Salute to Stan Laurel* (CBS) produced last November under the direction of Seymour Berns was not much of a tribute to the late comedian (who appeared briefly in a number of film clips brutally hacked out of their original context), and did not enhance the reputations of participants such as Dick Van Dyke, Lucille Ball, or Phil Silvers. On the same evening, David Wolper's *The Incredible World of James Bond* (NBC) turned out to be no more than an anthology of violent bits from the Bond films. *Sinatra* (CBS), on November 16, produced by Don Hewitt, did not live up (or down) to its advance billing as an improper exposé of the singer's private life. On the contrary, the program spent most of its time on his familiar public personality. Still, there were moments when the facade was breached, as when Sinatra observed that "if the press reports the world the way it reports me, then we are in real trouble."

Last May, CBS News pioneered a new kind of audience-participation program with the *National Driver's Test*. By dramatizing common situations in the life of every driver, giving the audience a chance to choose the right course of action from a number of alternatives, allowing viewers to compare their choice with that of groups in TV studios around the country as well as with the results of a national poll, this program succeeded in achieving the almost impossible. It reached a large audience, involved them fairly deeply, controlled their response, and communicated useful information.

The ratings for *Driver's Test* were so high that CBS decided to offer a number of similar specials during the current season: the *National Citizenship Test* (November 9; produced by Vern Diamond and Martin Weldon) revealed, among other facts, that 41 per cent of viewers were unable to name either senator from their state; the *National Health Test* (January 18 and 25), demonstrated that many of us are ignorant of some elementary medical facts; the *National Income Tax Test* is conveniently scheduled for April. NBC offered CBS the sincerest form of flattery by coming up with *Testing: Is Anybody Honest?* (January 23, produced by Craig Fisher), a program which shrewdly inveigled us into exposing and recognizing some of our own favorite hypocrisies. (*How Quick Is Your Eye?*, designed to demonstrate some of the pitfalls in the way of accurate perception, went on in late February.)

ABC got into the act a little late, and characteristically vulgarized a good idea. Garry Moore's *People Poll* (February 4, produced by Selig Alkon) was a prime specimen of lowbrow narcissism in which a lot of "ordinary" people who looked as though they had been chosen for their roles by Central Casting answered questions such as "Who is the boss in your household?" and "What do you think of boys with long hair?" The audience was invited to compare its own opinions on these vital matters with the national averages reported by the Gallup Poll, but a warm glow rather than enlightenment appeared to be what the producer was aiming at.

Only *Driver's Test* seems to have attracted a really large audience, and there is an obvious limit to the intellectual and moral sophistication of which such programs are capable. The Television Information Office is boasting about Elmo Roper's figures which indicate that the public now depend on TV for most of their information. Writing in the New York *Herald Tribune*, John Horn rather cruelly suggests that these shows test people's knowledge of what the networks don't bother to tell them. A good point, but not, one hopes, an argument for abandoning the experiment entirely.

WITHOUT a doubt, the most exciting and interesting specials this season have been devoted to the debate over Vietnam. CBS's "continuing coverage of the 'crisis' (later amended to 'war') in Vietnam" has certainly been as gripping as ABC's "continuing drama of *Peyton Place*." Perhaps similarities between the two series don't end with the strong-willed, inscrutable, petulant men whose big houses dominate their respective universes. Lyndon Johnson and Martin Peyton may be equally fated to suffer frustration and partial defeat on issues which they consider vital.

As late as mid-December, the consensus of last summer*, which kept network coverage of Vietnam hewing pretty close to the official line, still held firm. On December 14, CBS ran a special on *Where We Stand in Vietnam* (Producer-Director: Vern Diamond) in which six staff correspondents were released from the network's normal ban on the expression of personal opinions. Nobody at the front office need have worried. Though they grumbled about the administration's lack of candor and Congress's abdication of responsibility, all six appeared to agree that there was no realistic alternative to the existing policy. The program would have been very dull if it had not been for James Cameron, a British journalist just back from North Vietnam. The vigor of his dissent from the official view of the war appeared to shock and baffle the network men, and there was no real meeting of minds. Nevertheless, Cameron's was the first extended and unmuted voice of opposition I heard in some six or seven months of following the Vietnam "debate" on television.

A similar pattern developed on CBS' *Town Meeting of the World* the following week. Professor Henry Kissinger and two Harvard students defended a resolution that "the USA should carry out its commitment in Vietnam," against Michael Foot, M.P., and two Oxford undergraduates. The witty, freewheeling debating style of the British team made the Americans seem painfully square and dangerously naive. It was a victory less of logic and argument

*See "Consensus Television," COMMENTARY, October 1965.

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than of style and rhetoric. Nevertheless, for the first time, an anti-administration point-of-view was allowed to prevail on a major public-affairs broadcast. No American dissenter had, up to this point, been given the opportunity to expound his views at length.

On December 20, NBC presented *Vietnam—December 1965* (produced by Chet Hagan), a curious program which began (rather belligerently for the season of peace and goodwill) with General Westmoreland chatting to GI's about killing VC's, but ended moderately on a note of uncertainty. Chet Huntley made the rather unconvincing suggestion that Vietnik protest marchers were reacting to the shock of Kennedy's death, but in the next breath complained that the State Department had never successfully countered the argument that the conflict is a civil war. Frank McGee pleaded for either more candor or retirement with honor from the conflict.

NBC's *Projection '66* (December 26, produced by Chet Hagan) managed to achieve two hours of unrelieved boredom about foreign policy in spite (or because) of the participation of NBC's entire stable of correspondents plus members of the Foreign Policy Association. In contrast, CBS's half-hour *Christmas in Vietnam* (December 28, produced by Bernard Birnbaum) gave viewers a vivid and moving glimpse of ordinary decent men going about the business of war, and did not once strike a false ideological or emotional note. Dean Rusk, on *Meet the Press* (NBC, January 23), demonstrated that even Telstar and an expensive covey of foreign journalists in five capitals cannot make a press conference rewarding if the man being questioned is determined not to give anything away.

Late in January, the television consensus ceased merely to show cracks: it seemed at least temporarily to disintegrate. The most exciting news special in years was a 90-minute CBS *Vietnam Perspective* (the first of several) on "The Congress and the War" (January 30, directed by Robert Vitarelli) in which Representative Hale Boggs and Senators Clark, Morse, Mundt, and Stennis engaged in a

REMEMBER

The memories of Passovers gone by—the search and sale of the **Chometz**—Grandpa poking around the kitchen, making the horseradish and the **Choraches**—putting on the new suit of clothes and shoes—pockets full of hazel nuts—and almonds—anxiously waiting for the **Seder** to start—Uncle Joe and Aunt Sadie were always late—the whole family together—Grandpa looking like a king propping the pillow on the chair beside him—Grandma tired after baking and cooking all day but **"My Malke"** my queen, he called her—the **Kiddush** and then my turn for **"Ma Nishtanah"** and the answer given with Grandpa's voice ringing out over all—the first half of the **Hagadah** almost over—even the bitter herbs tasted so good—**Passover** it was always "strong"—all were compelled to eat it otherwise we could not get the hard boiled egg and salt water—and then the meal—nobody, but nobody, could cook better than Grandma—we ate—and ate and then the **"Benchen"**—and the rest of the **Hagadah**—and some more cups of wine—and the opening of the door—and the stories of how in the old country someone frightened the whole family by appearing at that door—but best of all the songs with which the second half of the **Hagadah** abound—and the feeling of drowsiness—contentment—and the thought that tomorrow the same thing once more.....

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debate so free-swinging as to seem almost incredible to anyone who had endured the countless long gray hours of muffled and evasive rhetoric over the past few months. Senator Morse even succeeded in ruffling the bland imperturbability of Eric Sevareid: not content with declaring that "we are an international outlaw in Vietnam," Morse, speaking directly into the camera, made a fervent plea for an end to secrecy. Sevareid abruptly changed the subject.

Whatever their views on Vietnam, everyone ought to be pleased that, belatedly and reluctantly, the networks finally accepted their responsibility to transmit a variety of opinions rather than an almost unwavering official line. None of the subsequent *Vietnam Perspective* specials matched the excitement of this one, but even the most decorous of them allowed more opportunity to dissent than would have been possible a few weeks earlier. Meanwhile, ABC decided to devote each weekly edition of *Scope* to the great debate until the crisis subsides. All networks cleared their afternoon schedules (at least some of the time) in order to cover the appearances of George Kennan, Dean Rusk, and Generals Gavin and Maxwell Taylor before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As everyone knows, the result was some of the most exciting political television since the 1960 election campaign. The Kennedy-Nixon debates were tense and dramatic, but because each man was trying to crowd his opponent out of the middle ground, the real issues between them were blurred or ignored. That could not be said about these confrontations.

But why did the networks begin so suddenly to display such an enthusiasm for dialectic? Not, certainly, because their news staffs reached a rational decision to broaden the intellectual scope of their Vietnam coverage. I. F. Stone has described the fate of any Washington correspondent who tries to express fundamental disagreement with the government—social isolation, exclusion from off-the-record briefings, and savage whispering campaign attacks. These add up to a price that networks cannot afford to pay.

The explanation for the change is to be found in the deviant activities of two important members of the Washington Establishment, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Majority Leader. If Senators Fulbright and Mansfield had not finally decided to express in public misgivings which they had long held in private, the network news services would never have dared to disturb the consensus. Clearly they interpret their role in the political process to be passive rather than active. As it is, the debate has been opened up at least six months too late to have much influence on foreign policy.

DURING the past year, CBS News has more than justified its claim to be the most responsible and public-spirited of the network services (a modest enough boast). It is sad that its president, Fred Friendly, should have resigned on a matter of principle, just as his policies were being fully vindicated. He was overruled by CBS Vice-President John Schneider on a decision to suspend regular afternoon programs in order to cover the testimony of George F. Kennan before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. (NBC carried the hearings, ironically using a pooled CBS camera crew.)

Commercial television certainly has its anomalies. One of the most extraordinary is its horror of offering the viewer a real choice at any given moment of the weekly schedule—on Saturday afternoon nothing but sports, late Tuesday evening nothing but public affairs, at blast-off time nothing but Cape Kennedy, and so on. And now Friendly has resigned in defense of the inalienable right of even the most apolitical housewife to choose between watching the Senate hearings or switching off her set. Of course there were other important issues at stake, but surely networks who placed the public interest before considerations of prestige and profit would long ago have reached an agreement to coordinate their program planning so as to avoid wasteful and irritating duplication. I wish Mr. Friendly had taken his stand on a matter of greater substance.

DO THEY order these things better elsewhere? In *Television: A World View* (Syracuse University Press), Wilson P. Dizard describes a few national television services from which American public-affairs broadcasters could pick up some tips—but he also describes a great many from which they could not. On the other hand, the world's appetite for American light entertainment is apparently insatiable; even the most high-minded or anti-capitalist television systems do not dare to ignore it. Mr. Dizard's lively and lucid survey gives a full account of the social, political, economic, and technical aspects of television broadcasting everywhere from Hong Kong to Hungary, and from West Germany to South Africa (where the most important fact about TV is that there is none). Apart from traces of irritation with the British and a tendency to worry too much about the American image abroad, the author succeeds in maintaining remarkable sanity and detachment.

During the next few years, communications satellites will probably begin to break down the monopolistic control which nations (apart from exceptions like Canada) are able to impose upon their television systems. Americans may then have an opportunity to compare the performance of their own networks with that of the BBC or the First German Television Network. In the meantime, a number of British adventure series are beginning to be scheduled in prime American time. *The Saint* (NBC), *The Baron* (ABC), *Secret Agent* (CBS), *The Avengers* and *Court Martial* (both ABC summer replacements) are all heavily indebted to American models—but then so were the Beatles! Are these shows a portent that television is on the road to becoming as international as the movies? Whatever the case, they provide a change of style and pace from the standard Hollywood product: *Secret Agent* and *The Avengers*, in particular, are written, acted, and directed with a swinging elegance that almost makes up for the violent triviality of their plots.

NEIL COMPTON *writes regularly on television in these pages.*

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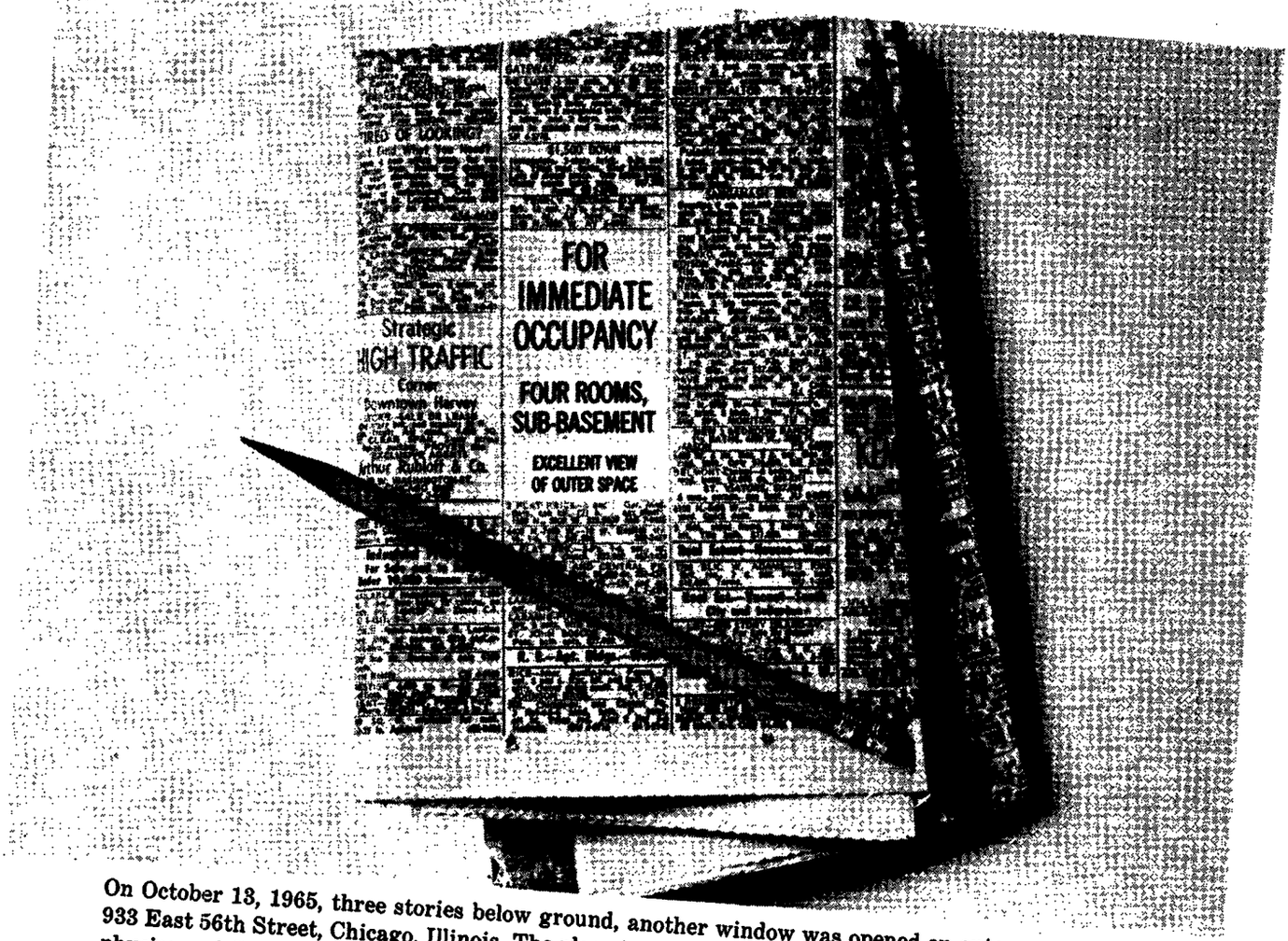

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THE CELTIC STRAIN

THE LIFE OF DYLAN THOMAS. By CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON. *An Atlantic Monthly Press Book. Little, Brown and Company. 370 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN WAIN

THE choice of an Anglo-American writer to write what must surely be the "official' biography of this Welsh poet is a fortunate one. Mr. FitzGibbon is an American citizen; I do not know how deep his American roots are, for he seems to have spent the bulk of his life in England and to have been educated there. I for one always assumed that he was an Englishman until I looked at the dust-jacket of this volume. But this dual nationality will have enabled, in fact it manifestly *has* enabled, Mr. FitzGibbon to understand the situation of a poet whose parents were born in Welsh-speaking families, and who was torn between England and Wales all his life.

Nothing is more revealing than the harsh, angry contempt aroused in a certain kind of Englishman by even the most harmless manifestations of Welsh cultural nationalism. The Scot can walk about London in his kilt, the Irishman can wrap himself in blarney and shamrocks, but when it comes to the Welshman's natural wish to preserve his own language, the Englishman—of a certain kind—begins to feel personally affronted. There is more than a hint of the jackboot in the violence of his reaction: *of course* it is foolish, and probably cunning and self-seeking as well, for the Welsh to hold *eisteddfodau* and encourage the writing of poems in strict classical meters; *of course* every attempt to preserve Welsh local custom is simply another way of fleecing the English tourist; *of course* the Welshman's reverence for the word, his passion for oratory and poetry, is one more mark of his garrulous unreliability.

What hidden passions fuel this violent animosity I do not know; as an Englishman I can only feel ashamed of it. One reason may be that Wales, instead of being tucked away tidily at the northern end of Britain or even more tidily across the Irish Sea, lies so close to England; intimacy has prevented the fostering of any romantic illusions. The Scots, for instance, have never ceased to brag about the royal house they gave to England, the Stuarts, in spite of the fact that the Stuarts were obstinate and stupid and a complete failure; whereas the Welsh, who gave to England the most intelligent and original royal dynasty of all, the Tudors, are never even allowed to mention the fact.

These random reflections are in order when one considers the life and work of Dylan Thomas, if only because of the total failure of most English critics to allow for his Welshness; to "allow for" it not in the sense of making excuses and overlooking faults, but in the sense of seeing it intelligently and sympathetically, of recognizing it as one of the features that give interest and value to his work; and also, where biography is in question, as one of those tragic tensions that pulled him apart and destroyed him as a man.

MOST of the bad, unilluminating criticism that Thomas has had—and he has had plenty—has come from critics to whom his Welshness is merely part of a general phoniness, to whom it has never occurred that if they saw him in a more generous light and a better perspective he would not seem phony at all. (Time has not dealt generously with some of these critics. Mr. Wolf Mankowitz was finely contemptuous of Thomas in an article in *Scrutiny* in 1947, referring to his metrical virtuosity as "Ersatz"; in view of his subsequent and almost total involvement with big-time showbiz, is Mr. Mankow-

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itz himself quite the holy shunner of "Ersatz" he once was? There are sad ironies here.)

Mr. FitzGibbon is quite free of this habitual blindness, as he is free of the over-compensation shown by some Welsh critics who relate Thomas's work too patly to the tradition of a language he never learned. He shows his seriousness by starting out with a very interesting section on the family and social background, and right away, on the first line of the second page, he is risking the opinion that Dylan Thomas had memories of a rural, Welsh-speaking world that were not only personal but "atavistic." To some people, the claim will be meaningless, and certainly "atavistic" cultural and social memories are not the kind of thing one can demonstrate and prove by evidence, or not the evidence that would be acceptable in a court of law. I myself believe that some such explanation is the only one that makes sense: Thomas was the son of an English teacher, he grew up in Swansea, which is a completely Anglicized big town, his reading was entirely English; so why did he not write like an English poet? And I must admit that I have now, finally, lost all patience with the answer, "Because he was a phony," which for so long has been the stock response of his denigrators.

This business of atavistic and ancestral relationships is vital to the criticism of many artists today, when centralization has gone so far and the "world languages" are unmanageable monoliths. In an interesting passage about Thomas's religious beliefs and non-beliefs, Mr. FitzGibbon writes: "It would be nearer the truth to suggest that he felt, as a poet, the beauty and glory of the divine concept as revealed to, and by, the great English religious poets, Donne, Vaughan, Crashaw, George Herbert, Hopkins." I don't know whether Mr. FitzGibbon realized it as he wrote down the names, but of the poets in that list, Donne was at least partly of Welsh ancestry, Vaughan and George Herbert were Welshmen outright, and Hopkins had a passion for Wales and for the Welsh language, which he studied, that might fairly indicate some such "atavistic" yearning on his own part. The point is that the Welsh contribution to English literature has always been distinctive, so much so that when one names "the great English religious poets" from whom Dylan Thomas might have gained his underlying notions about God, most of them turn out to have been Welshmen. Indeed, essentially "English" poets like Keats, Pope, or Tennyson, hardly touched him at all. His affinities were with the poets who have that "Celtic" strain that is so hard to define but so immediately perceptible when it is there.

Mr. FitzGibbon, with all the narrative skill of the accomplished novelist he is, takes us through the rumble and rummage of Dylan's life, the debts, the drinks, the moonlight flits, the litter of journeys and parties and quarrels and good times, but under the scurrying surface the gaunt outline is as plain as an aerial photograph: this was a poet without a home. It isn't only that he and Caitlin had no money, though this was a terrible burden; never, never, *never* from the moment they got married did they have enough money to live in decent comfort, and this was what bred the habit of wild celebrations when they did get their hands on a few pounds; it was, quite simply, that Dylan couldn't sit still. Welsh life meant either the respectability of suburban Swansea or the slow, rooted rural life which he loved but from which he was always escaping to London with its anonymous, uncaring freedom. In 1949, at a very low ebb in his life, Dylan Thomas left England for Wales, and celebrated his homecoming in one of those funny, clowning, overwritten broadcasts that sometimes contained a disconcerting crumb of truth. In it, with a scatter of hilarious detail, he told his listeners the real problem: that when living in England he could not remember his Welsh self.

I could not remember, try as I might, if the old, booted body that bore its grumbles and juices so scowlingly up Portland Place to do its morning rant was the same as that which, hoofed with seaweed, did a jig on the Llanina sands and barked at the far mackerel.

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Lost and blown about in London town, a barrel-shaped leaf, am I still the same, I said to myself, as that safe and sound loller at the corners of Wales who, to my memory, was happy as a sandman.

How could I answer my silly questions unless I went back to Wales?

THIS is the classic problem of the expatriate. And if he is an artist, it confronts him in his art also. Dylan Thomas could do no other than try to express a Welsh sensibility in the English language. The immense effort that went into his poetry, the long and toilsome writing and re-writing, sometimes a hundred times over for a single poem, perhaps indicates that there was something unnatural, against the grain, in this task. There is what seems to me an important sidelight on this point in Mr. Gwyn Williams's introduction to his anthology, *Presenting Welsh Poetry:*

> There is little that is vague, misty, effusive or "bardic" about Welsh poetry. Its qualities are rather tightness, clarity and pungency. This we owe to the strictness of the rules of versification and to the hardness of Welsh rural life. When a Welshman writes in English he is apt to kick his heels in a wider meadow of vaguer imagery and a so-called Celtic quality emerges which is absent, or has until recently been absent, from poetry in Welsh. A remark once made to me by Mr. T. S. Eliot illuminates this point. We were discussing what happens to writers who use a language other than their own, and he said (these are not his exact words but my memory of his meaning) that such a writer was exploring an aspect of himself which could not readily be reached, or perhaps could not exist, in the medium of his own language. The use of foreign language implies the extension of one's experience, therefore, beyond one's inherited traditions and becomes inevitable if one's native language fails to widen its scope with changing ideas and conditions.

Since Dylan Thomas knew no Welsh, it was not, for him, a matter of "extending" his own experience but of substituting for it an

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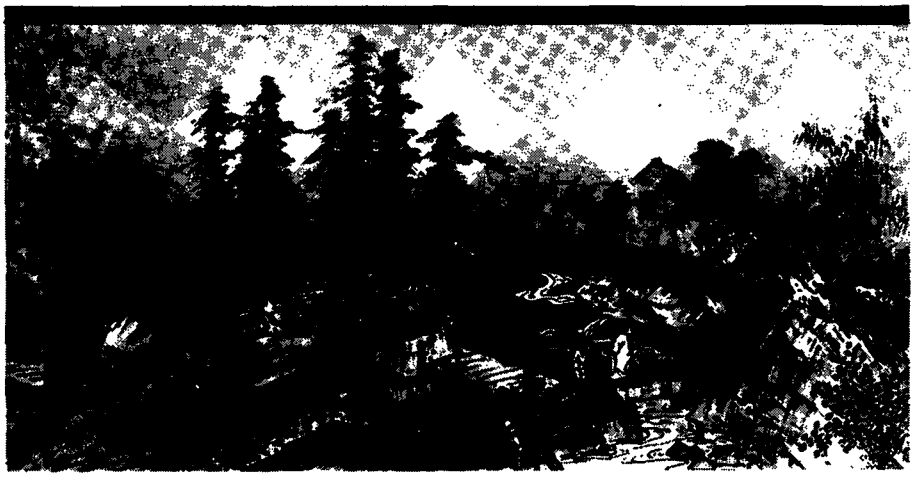

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experience that was in many ways alien to him. I cannot believe that this was without strain and anguish.

In the years 1941 through 1944, the poet was employed as a film scriptwriter; Mr. FitzGibbon discusses his attitude to this work, which kept him away from poetry for three whole years, and, while leaving open the question of whether or not it was a bad thing for him to work in films, is quite firm that Thomas himself had a relish for the job: "He did not regard his work as a prostitution of his talents. . . . On the contrary, Dylan was fascinated by films—had he not been film-struck all his life?—and he was in this, as in all the other aspects of his work—whether as reader, actor, or writer—a pro."

IF DYLAN Thomas was "a pro" in film-writing he must have been aware that the film is primarily a visual, not a verbal, medium. The pleasure he took in it must have been at least partly that of a release from the writer's loneliness, the sinking of his individual personality into the collective personality of the film. (It sometimes happens that a film is dominated by one man, but that man is never the scriptwriter.) And this, too, is revealing. The split between Welsh poet and English poem—to put it even more crudely, between Welsh inspiration and English art—did not make itself felt when he wrote for films.

Of course this English-Welsh conflict was not the only one that tore Dylan Thomas apart; but the others were, I think, related to it. An only son (his sister was much older, so that one might almost as well say "an only child"), he was much indulged at home and consistently allowed to avoid doing what he didn't want to do. He took not the slightest interest in his school work, and with an admirable consistency refused to bother with it; if things got too hot at school he could always throw an illness and stay at home. From this root sprang the almost pathological refusal, in adult life, to take responsibility or face up to anything awkward—in his dealings with the world, that is; the problems of his "sullen art" he faced with unwavering courage, if often with a sinking heart.

One thing this biography makes clear is that the most productive phase of Dylan Thomas's life was the period between leaving school (at sixteen) and going to London (at nineteen). During these years, from July 1931 to November 1934, he lived with his parents ("the Rimbaud of Cwmdonkin Drive"), enjoyed as much local celebrity as was good for him, and was completely sheltered from the world. His one attempt at breadwinning, a humble job on the South Wales *Daily Post*, lasted fifteen months before the inevitable recognition on both sides that he was simply not cut out for day-to-day journalism; and even in that period he lived on his father and used all his pay as pocket money.

Naturally, during these years, he was discontented: his powerful adolescent sexuality was unsatisfied; fame and recognition, though they came quickly, did not come quickly enough; his mother's love was cloying; Wales was a prison. But discontented or not, he worked better—more copiously, with more assurance—at this time than at any other. For all its irksomeness, life in the womb suited him better than life out of it. He was a true Rimbaud in this at least, that the bulk of his life's work was done as an adolescent. Rimbaud wrote nothing after eighteen; if Thomas had stopped at nineteen, the parallel would be complete, since, as Mr. FitzGibbon writes: "It is . . . no exaggeration to say that three-quarters of his work as a poet dates in style, in concept and often in composition from this Swansea period."

It is, I think, Mr. FitzGibbon's particular service to Thomas's memory that he has emphasized the importance of these years, and done his best to unearth every available fact about them. The documentation is poor, indeed, compared with the wealth of detail about the later years, but what there is he has found. And the answers to most of our questions about Dylan Thomas lie hidden somewhere in these adolescent years, just as Yeats's Irish childhood is full of meaning for the mature man and his work.

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Could he, with better luck, caution, a longer span, have developed into the Yeats of Wales? Our estimate of him will depend, finally, on our own individual answer to that question. But one thing is clear. To do for Wales what Yeats did for Ireland would call for an even greater poetic discipline and dedication. The initial confusion, the chaos that would have to be reduced to order before starting, is so much greater. Ireland in the days of the young Yeats (or the young Joyce or O'Casey) had what a small nation needs if it is to produce artists: it had separateness and self-awareness. For all the feuds and hatreds, for all the loss of tradition and the forgetting of the Irish language, Ireland was a country, whereas Wales is no more than a region. Yeats, in his middle years, was made a senator in recognition of his important part in the national life. Even if Dylan Thomas had had any such ambition, there was and is no Welsh Senate for him to take his seat in. His position was thus rather like that of the Jewish writer who feels no tug toward Israel: his special place, his special idiom, were racial, not national. And are these "the right twigs for an eagle's nest"?

ONE DAY, Wales may have the poet who writes in English and still manages to unite all the diverse fragments of Welsh feeling and thus be a truly national voice. But before this can happen, Cardiff must become a city as metropolitan as Dublin or Edinburgh, the Welsh language must be felt as a unifying rather than a divisive force, and Welshmen must share a vital belief in themselves as a nation. No poet can, by himself, call these things into being. And unless and until they *are* called into being, the Welsh poet, however exquisitely gifted, can only follow one of two paths: the anarchic lyricism and personal nostalgia of Thomas (Dylan) or the beautiful elegiac hopelessness of Thomas (R.S.). Read these two poets together, and you have the Welsh situation in all its poignancy.

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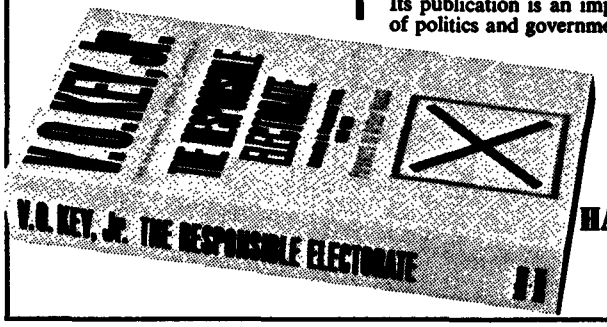

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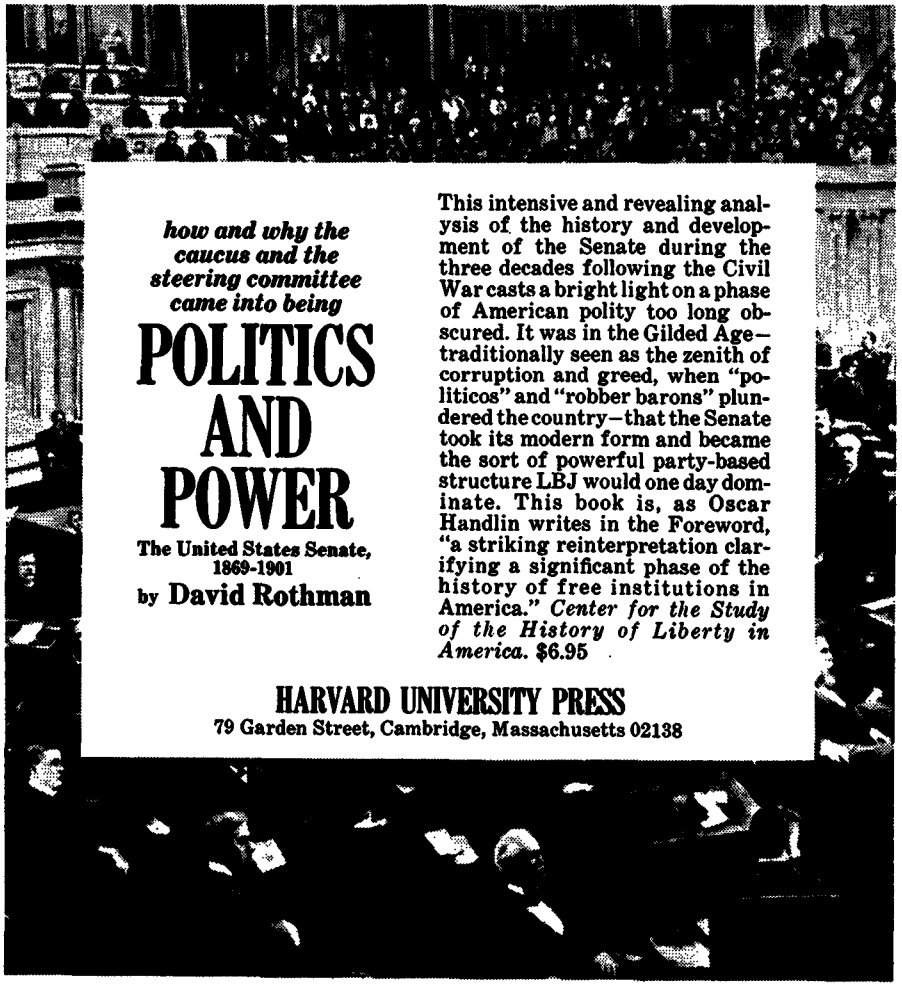

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LIBERAL CATHOLIC THOUGHT

BELIEF AND UNBELIEF. By MICHAEL NOVAK. *Macmillan. 192 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by SIDNEY HOOK

As WORLD social movements, both Communism and Catholicism have undergone profound changes in recent years. With respect to Communism, these changes are primarily structural rather than ideological. Its monolithic character is shattered—probably beyond repair, for the hostility among the Communist states is likely to become further exacerbated by national and even racial conflicts as time goes on. With respect to Catholicism, the developments within the contemporary Church offer even more remarkable and open evidence of significant changes because they are primarily doctrinal. Despite its previous accommodations to secular trends in the West, the Church had never formally altered the position that it alone held the keys to eternal salvation which therefore justified its right to secular privileges that it denied to other faiths. To anyone who has been on the firing line resisting Catholic doctrines and practices during the last two generations, the recent abandonment of this authoritarian assumption will appear as surprising as it is welcome. He need only recall the Church's ideological crusades in the 30's and 40's, and its ready contention that there was a direct and ineluctable line of descent from liberalism and Protestantism to Communism and/or Fascism.

Just how far the Church has come in recent years is evidenced by the fact that *Catholic Principles of Politics,* by Msgr. John A. Ryan and Father Francis Joseph Boland, formerly accepted as authoritative, has become an embarrassment to American Catholics. A priest who attempted today to argue its doctrine—that since the Catholic Church is the only true religion and since the propagation of religious error by other faiths imperils the eternal salvation of the faithful, it therefore follows that freedom of propaganda for religious error must be denied wherever Catholics have sufficient power to do so—would be severely censured by the authorities of the American Church.

The Second Ecumenical Council shows that this revisionism is not merely an American phenomenon. To the extent that the Vatican has come to accept the reality of religious pluralism in a secular society, this is evidence that the Americanist heresy is no longer a heresy. The Church has also set out to win fresh ground among the classes it has alienated by its conservatism. Doctrines and rituals have been modernized and even the traditional life and habits of priests and nuns have come under critical scrutiny. Though the Catholic position remains illiberal in such matters as birth control and public aid to parochial schools, it has not lagged far behind the liberal position on other issues. Its views compare favorably with those of some large Protestant denominations on such questions as civil rights, poverty, and free trade-unionism. It is also backing away from its primitive condemnation of all varieties of Communism, which it hardly distinguished from Socialism, and today is calling for a dialogue with Marxist thought, and taking initiatives in the quest for world peace.

THESE alterations in the political and social character of contemporary Catholicism are beginning to be reflected as well in its philosophy and theology. There is even evidence that the "perennial" philosophy is being cautiously Protestantized. The glory of God is no longer proclaimed by a fixed firmament on high—which man in our age can tamper with if not remake—but is being sought in the depths of the human spirit. The golden chains of reasoning in Aquinas no longer hang from immediate truths of perception or self-evident axioms of thought, and his conclusions, therefore, have lost their coercive force. God is not approached by Reason but through existentialist agony, and is conceived as a hidden Presence, hopefully to be encountered at the end of a long crawl out of the human predicament.

In the past, the charge of atheism functioned in Catholic philos-

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ophy as the ultimate *reductio ad absurdum*, a malediction as well as an argument. Today in some influential Catholic philosophical circles atheism is no longer regarded with horror but studied with sympathy as a manifestation of a genuinely religious spirit and of a profound concern with man's moral responsibility. Never in the history of Catholic doctrine has there been such recognition of the nobility of disbelief, never such awareness of the moral challenge of atheism to Christianity and to the other religions that deny the autonomy of moral judgment, never such humility in countering its argument.

One is tempted to say that having succeeded in demoralizing whatever natural theology remained in Protestantism, Tillich and Niebuhr have begun to infect Catholic thinking as well by substituting a deep, mystical incoherence for the dogmatic *non-sequiturs* of Neo-Thomism. Their "neo-Orthodox" position rightfully judges a man's character by his actions and commitments and not merely by his beliefs. But it mistakenly interprets action and commitment as evidence of truth about what exists in nature and super-nature instead of being at most the means by which evidence concerning truth may be uncovered. Most striking of all, it seems to suggest that the realm of reason, not disembodied Reason but reasonable belief or intelligence, must be resigned to the naturalist! Nor will resort to the tools of linguistic analysis, according to this view, bring nourishment to those who hunger for God, soul, and immortality. It will merely earn them the right to play language-games with the word "God."

ALL THESE tendencies find expression in a remarkable book, *Belief and Unbelief* by Michael Novak, a young Catholic philosopher, who has studied at Rome as well as Harvard and who writes with verve and distinction about God, man, and the world. Impressed by the scrupulous restraint with which naturalist philosophers refuse to read their fears or hopes into the universe and by the depths of their tragic humanism,

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he has made a fresh attempt to restate the case for Christian theism and to meet the challenge of naturalism without sacrificing or diluting his own faith. He recognizes that the revival of contemporary theology has been due less to an upsurge of religious faith than to a shift in intellectual interest from questions about the truth or falsity of assertions concerning the existence of God to questions concerning the meaning of "God." He is aware, however, that any expression of religious faith or belief presupposes the existence of God—granting that God may be conceived in various ways. What is of greater moment, the truth or falsity of such assertions takes us beyond purely linguistic, psychological, or sociological issues. Epicurus could hardly be called a religious man even though he acknowledged the existence of gods. Since the gods were indifferent to man's lot, they had no more religious significance than objects in the sky. However, Novak would differ with those modernists who maintain that religion can dispense with any kind of theology. God's existence or non-existence makes a difference to the believer.

Nonetheless, there is no more comfort for traditionalists in Novak's views than in Tillich's. He rejects any belief in God that rests on "neat conceptions of design and order in the world" and that views the supernatural as a "second story of the observable world." The uncritical, naive, literal acceptance of the symbols and myths that have stirred countless millions of worshippers of the great historic faiths, leads inevitably to religious superstition. All such conceptions, Novak writes, "if maintained, must mean the demise of Christianity among men of intellectual integrity." Nor can any legitimate support for believers be extracted "from the cultural context." According to Novak, "the man in tune with our culture does not believe in God." Some would question this as a report of fact. But fact or not, one is puzzled that the author should regard it as relevant. Even supposing that the men in tune with our culture did believe in God, this would still prove nothing

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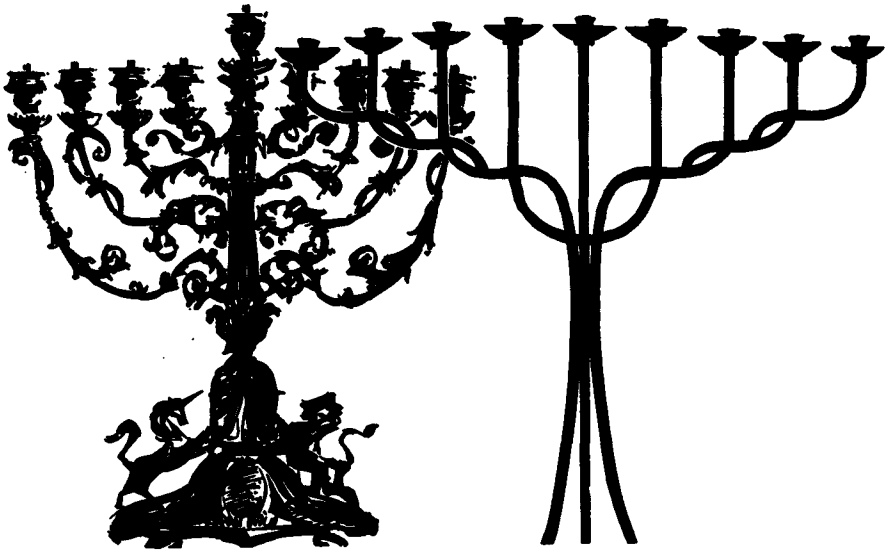
about the truth of their belief or even its religious value.

ANOTHER seductive approach which Novak resists is that of the men who despair of the whole intellectual enterprise of finding grounds for religious belief and are content to serve God wherever He is to be found in the battle for a better life in this world. Such believers see a crusade for the Holy Grail in every good cause. Since the utter transcendence of God is beyond reach of any conceptual grasp, who knows but that in His hiddenness God may be closer to Camus than to heresy-hunting bishops? This tendency, however, strikes Novak as dangerous. In an age in which non-believers have gone down fighting for universal freedom and justice, the religious becomes all things to all good men: ". . . one becomes godless to the godless, secular to the secular, pragmatic to the pragmatists, a social reformer to the reformers. But then, all of a sudden, it seems more economical not to be a believer at all. Why not be simply Godless?"

An excellent question! How does Novak answer it? At times he seems to suggest that if atheism were a more consistent "human policy" he would be prepared to adopt it. This is a rather obscure, if not dangerous, standard since what may be justified as a human policy may not have any bearing on the question of truth. There are situations in which on humane grounds one is justified in encouraging individuals to adopt a policy in the teeth of evidence that it will fail. But even if the policy leads to fruitful consequences, this is not always sufficient ground for affirming that the evidence warranted belief in the results. Novak is aware of this limitation; ultimately he rests his belief not on policy but on the evidence of experience—the primary awareness of insight, reflection, and especially "the drive to understand." He denies Feuerbach's contention that the secret of theology is philosophical anthropology—the projection of the unsatisfied needs of the human heart in a radically contingent world. He contends instead that the secret of theology is



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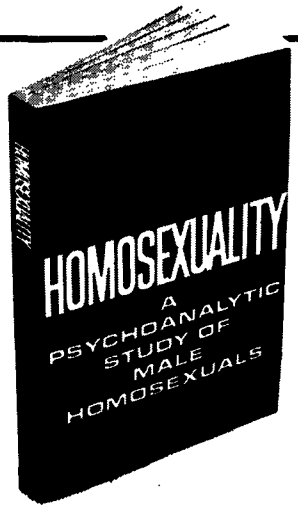

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intentionality—"intelligent subjectivity." The key to what is other and greater than man in the world is not to be found in man's needful, suffering existence but rather in his insatiable intellectual hunger to understand. In this view God cannot be established as a first cause—He is the presupposition of our tendency to look for causes; His existence cannot be proved—yet it alone makes intelligible the quest for intelligibility.

There are several points to be noted about this curious approach. First it overlooks the depth of Feuerbach's insight. A hunger or drive to understand is just as much a part of man's passional nature as other hungers or drives—less fierce, to be sure, but often more sustained. But why should anyone believe that there must be an answering response to human need, whether emotional or intellectual, except on the basis of a piece of question-begging into which Mr. Novak should be too sophisticated to lapse? That man seeks God clearly shows that man is not God, but why assume that what he seeks must exist? Granting even that the quest is not absurd, that some men's need to understand the world has the same poignancy as other men's hunger for a great love, in what way does this constitute evidence of what is presumed to be there, waiting to be disclosed? Actually, the Feuerbachian analysis has point as an explanation of religious belief only on the assumption that such belief is a distorting projection, a faith in an illusion or dream. If a man is really being persecuted, it is not an analyst he should see. When we refer him to one, or use the expression "persecution complex," we have already judged his belief false. In general, whenever we employ terms like "complex" or projection," either as descriptive or explanatory of human belief, the assumption is that the primary subjective experience of some presence is *not* a veridical sign of its existence. A person may die of fear of what is not there; he may also achieve bliss in a quest for an intelligible order that cannot be found.

Secondly, Novak's emphasis on subjectivity is so firm that his leap across it to the Rock of Divine Objectivity is quite implausible. He claims that "the philosopher's empire is his own inner life" and that his quest for understanding begins with an interpretation of his own identity. But fidelity to understanding takes the self only partly beyond the bias of self-interest, for the possibility of fully objective knowledge is suddenly seen to require a "transcendent intelligent subject, God" as the guarantee of human self-understanding and the locus of human good.

ASIDE from this puzzling leap from the human to the divine, the entire train of thought rests on the mistaken assumption that the philosopher can understand his own inner life without understanding history, and without reference to complex social institutions such as language. The self is inter-twined with the not-self, but the fact that we can make objective distinctions between them is not an adequate reason for inferring or postulating the existence of a Great Self. Vision is wonderfully and incomparably different from the darkness of the atoms in the void or from whatever the conditions are that produce vision. It cannot be explained only in terms of the structure of the eye. Nonetheless, it is unnecessary to postulate the brooding Vision of a Great Eye to make us see better or to make seeing more intelligible.

As one would expect in a book whose mood of desperate faith suggests the cry, "Oh Lord, I believe! Help Thou my Unbelief," the formal argument is the weakest part of the author's case. It is revealed in the very mode of his expression. Throughout the book there are such statements as, "If the real is intelligible, then there may well be a God." Whatever the conditional clause means, it is obviously compatible with the conclusion that there may well not be a God. There is, to be sure, something appealing about Mr. Novak's tentativeness. It is as if he were not seeking to convince others of the truth of his belief so much as pleading with them to understand his decision to believe with the same generosity of spirit that he understands their decision

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not to believe. The inconclusiveness of the position cannot, however, be redeemed by its tentativeness where it engages in explicit argument, as in the following passage:

> Is there, then, a God? Have we evidence to support our belief that there is? It seems that we have one main line of evidence: all those things that seem to indicate that the real is the intelligible, and the insight which insists that, without an intelligent source, the intelligibility of the real is a mere accident and hence unintelligible. This, then, is the structure of the reflections that lead us to think belief in God is justified.

These reflections are vulnerable at every point. Novak's use of the term "real" suffers from the same ambiguity it possesses in the Hegelian equation between "the real" and "the reasonable." Every attempt to distinguish "the real" from "the existent" conceals the surreptitious conversion of the term "real" from a descriptive term to a prescriptive or evaluative one. As existences, the real and the unreal are on the same experiential footing. They are what they are, and differ only in their reliability as signs or evidences for our inferences. Under certain circumstances if I didn't see an "unreal object" (say, an after-image or converging "parallel" tracks), it would be a cause of alarm almost as great as if I acted on the assumption that what I saw, I shall continue to see and grasp when I change perspective. A comparable ambiguity attaches to the term "intelligible." The unreal may be just as intelligible if by that is meant either familiar, or customary, or explicable, as the real. Even the accidental is not unintelligible. The classification of an event as an accident already tells us something about it.

WHY SHOULD the intelligibility of anything, moreover, depend upon its emanation from an intelligent source? When a man says, "It stands to reason" or "It figures," in speaking of an inference, he assumes that he knows the rule or principle or habit of thought which it illustrates, or, if the ref-

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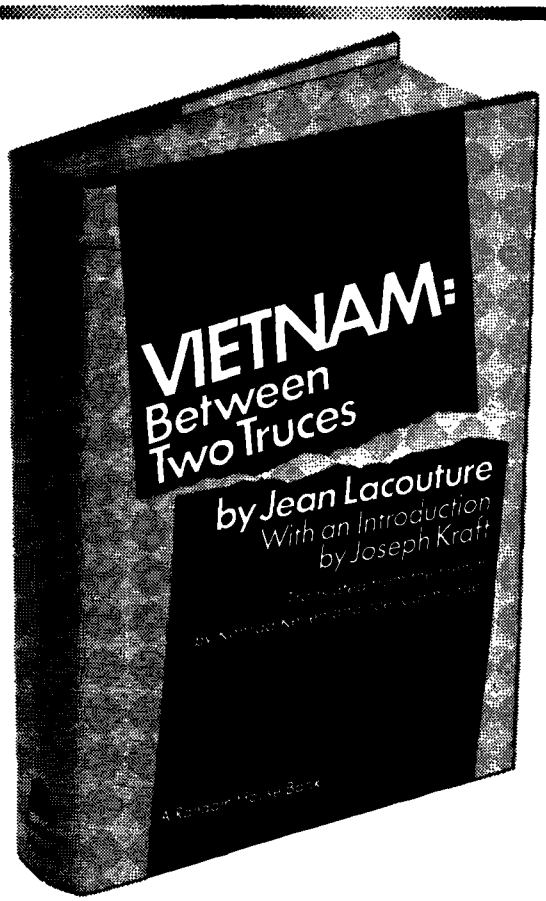

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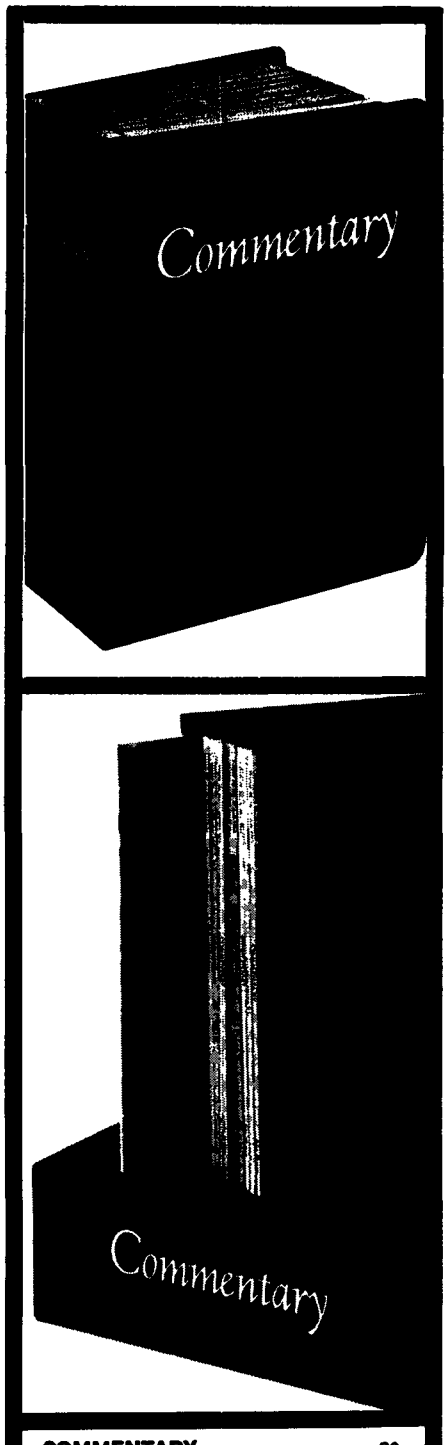

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erence is to an event, the explanatory hypothesis that accounts for its occurrence. Why does something become *more* intelligible, if it originates from an intelligent source? Does the existence of an intelligent source depend for *its* intelligibility on a parent source without end? Is it not possible for something unintelligible to emanate from an intelligent source? It appears to happen every day to intelligent people. Finally, if we are going to make a mystery of the mere givenness of things, why should the existence of God make the world more intelligible than His non-existence, since the givenness of the supernatural would be just as much a surd as the givenness of the natural world, and decidedly more problematic?

Mr. Novak tries to turn the flank of the naturalist position by making it appear that all philosophical positions depend upon initial decisions and commitments. Since he holds that they all start from scratch he faces the problem of how we are to determine which ones are more valid than others. "Decisions are the root of philosophy," he claims. This seems to me to be as questionable as the contention that skepticism is the foundation of knowledge. Decisions, of course, enter into philosophy but it seems to me that when they do, like our doubts in fields of knowledge, they are the crown, not the root, of belief. Philosophical positions cannot be "proved" but when they are justified they rest on something which is less a decision than a discovery of a state of affairs, a state of the world, society, or man which we do not *in fact* doubt even when we pretend to. Novak underestimates the strength of the naturalist position which is that all human beings live and die in the natural order, even when they seek to defy it. It is the matrix of human sanity. Whatever is not poetry or myth must shoulder the burden of convincing us that there is another order of experience and existence. This book falls far short of doing so.

Still, naturalistic humanists should welcome Mr. Novak's first steps away from the traditional pieties of dominant Catholic thought. There is implicit in his neo-Protestantism an ethical commitment that makes the entire question of God's existence irrelevant to the specific causes of peace and freedom which concern men most today. When he writes of "judging man by God's standards" he can only mean that he is judging man by his own moral standards. He should have an easier time defending them as his own than as God's.

FEMINIST IDEOLOGY

THE BETTER HALF: THE EMANCIPATION OF THE AMERICAN WOMAN. By ANDREW SINCLAIR. *Harper & Row. 394 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER LASCH

ANDREW Sinclair's book is another attempt to write the history of the American woman—a subject that has the same fascination for social historians that "the great American novel" used to have for writers. *The Better Half*, in spite of its title and in spite of its jacket, which displays the usual series of drawings showing woman's progress from bustle to bikini—as if "emancipation" were a matter mainly of shedding one's clothes—is not a confection but a serious, scholarly book; and if it is finally a disappointing book, that is not because Sinclair lacks the imagination or the energy necessary to explain the subject, but because the subject itself, as presently defined, seems to be uncommonly resistant to explanations of any sort.

Most histories of feminism either idolize the movement or wildly abuse it. Eleanor Flexner's *Century of Struggle* is a recent example of the first genre (the feminists were courageous democrats struggling for women's "rights"), and Marynia Farnham's *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, remains a classic of the second (feminism=penis envy). Sinclair is sympathetic, but he is also sensitive to some of the nuances of the feminist argument that tend to elude admirers. He is particularly sensitive to the way in which a demand for equality often shaded off into an assertion of the moral superiority of women. Indeed the contrast—some would call it a decline—between 18th-century egali-

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tarianism and 19th-century sentimentality is one of the central preoccupations of Sinclair's book—I won't say one of his theses, because the book is more survey than argument. The title itself, which I objected to a moment ago as sounding more frivolous than the contents warrant, may be taken as an implied criticism of a recurring strain in feminist ideology (and, of course, in American popular culture as a whole)—the view that woman's "nature" inclines her to altruism, tenderness, and moral refinement, whereas men are selfish, aggressive, and uncouth. As Sinclair points out, this idea leads straight back to the cult of domesticity which the original feminists were attacking.

> The concepts of the sexual equality of human reason and of the human soul have been discarded, particularly in America, for the concept of the biological and psychological differences of the sexes. If the first feminists used their ideals to protest against the worship of the mother in the home, modern feminists tend to use their lack of ideals and reliance on sociology to renew that worship.

OTHER historians of feminism have treated the movement simply as a demand for political rights, especially the vote. Sinclair avoids that pitfall. He makes it clear that the early feminists wanted not only the vote but education and careers. In short, they wanted women to be something besides wives and mothers. If these emphases tended to be crowded out of later phases of the movement in favor of the single demand for the vote—a development, incidentally, to which Sinclair might have given more attention—that merely offers another example of the way in which feminism eventually accommodated itself to the cultural and political climate of the United States, where a demand for "equal rights," however irrelevant, made so much more effective an appeal than a challenge to the morality of domesticity.

In any case, Sinclair is right to emphasize the non-political components of feminism. He also senses the connection between feminism and certain quasi-feminist but essentially reactionary responses to the changing condition of Ameri-

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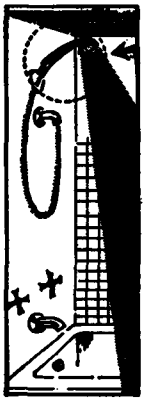

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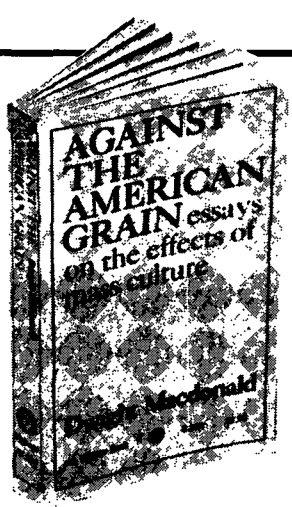

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can women, such as the "book-making propensities," as he calls them, of the mid-19th century. But he does not see clearly what the connection is; and it is here that the general inadequacy of his conceptual scheme begins to reveal itself. Insofar as literary pursuits encouraged economic independence for women, Sinclair can see the importance of sentimental fiction for a study of the "emancipation of the American Woman." But the content of this writing puzzles him; most of it reflects a cult of home and motherhood with which feminism, it would seem, had nothing to do. Thus he deplores the domestic novels of the period and describes *Godey's Lady's Book*, the leading woman's magazine of the 19th century, as "sentimental and fashion-conscious." But according to Helen Papashvily's study of the domestic novel, *All the Happy Endings*, these books sometimes betrayed a latent hostility toward men which had some features in common with feminism. And Sarah Hale, editor of *Godey's*, was not an advocate but an indefatigable opponent of the "tyranny of Fashion," for in her view, as in the view of other domestic moralists of the period, "fashion" signified an aristocratic penchant for conspicuous display that was quite incompatible with the demands of home and motherhood. Mrs. Hale grasped the important principle, later worked out in detail by Olive Schreiner, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Thorstein Veblen, that the leisure classes value women chiefly as objects of display; and she abhorred the "fine lady" as vehemently as any feminist. "The help that the feminists received from the mass magazines of Victorian times was small," Sinclair says. Even a casual study of Mrs. Hale's writings for *Godey's Lady's Book*, however, turns up passages that might have been written by a feminist, in which Mrs. Hale inveighs against the "marriage market" and complains that girls are educated not in the practical subjects that would make them good wives but in the useless "accomplishments" that enable them to catch husbands. Mrs. Hale was objecting to the same thing feminists objected to, the treatment of women as expensive ornaments—from

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which followed the frantic pursuit of husbands by young girls. It is also useful to recall that Sarah Hale was an exponent of "female education." She was not, of course, a feminist. On the contrary, she believed that marriage and motherhood ought to be the consuming business of a woman's life. But the point is that on an important issue —hostility to "fashion"—her views, and those of other domestic moralists, coincided with and reinforced those of the feminists.

SINCLAIR, like practically every other student of feminism, assumes that feminism and the cult of domesticity were radically opposed. In fact, however, they stood in an ambiguous relation to one another; and this ambiguity points to an even more important ambiguity in feminism itself. On the one hand, the feminists urged women to aspire to something better than domestic drudgery. Some feminists pressed their campaign against the bourgeois cult of the family to the logical conclusion of attacking marriage itself. Most of them were satisfied with advocating careers outside the home. All of them opposed the proposition that woman's place was in the home, and for that reason both the feminists and their detractors have interpreted the movement as an assault against the last stronghold of Victorian culture, the patriarchal family.

On the other hand, it becomes clear that the real object of feminist agitation, especially in its later phase, was not domesticity as such but the "parasitism" of women. If the later feminists tended to confuse the two, it was because the family itself, during the 19th century, had changed its emphasis from production to leisure-class consumption, as the middle classes more and more patterned their lives on what they took to be aristocratic models. It can be argued that this development, though it had nothing to do with feminism —was, in fact, profoundly disconcerting to feminists—at least partially freed middle-class women (for a time, anyway) from the narrow round of domestic duties to which they had been bound, especially from those associated with incessant child-bearing; for the middle classes now began deliberately to control the size of their families.* But the feminists did not see these things as liberating. "Emancipation," for them, meant not leisure but work, and it was at the very moment that emancipation, in the sense of enlarged access to the world outside the family, became something of a reality for women, that the feminists finally won a hearing for their case against the "fine lady." The feminist critique of "fashion" now coincided with a growing national anxiety about the erosion of domestic values, a fact which may help to explain the victories—the somewhat ambiguous victories—won by the movement in the early years of the 20th century. In any case, there is good reason to interpret the later feminist movement, and perhaps the earlier stages of the movement as well, not as a force which undermined the family, but as a revival of the domestic virtues—notably the domestic virtue of work—in the name of sexual equality.

THIS view, if it proved to be sound, would explain more fully why modern feminism, as Sinclair notes, leads back to "the worship of the mother in the home." Given the conditions of American culture, the mother remains a more appealing symbol of productive feminine labor than the career woman. The "woman question" is a function not so much of the Victorian cult of the "better half" but of the middle-class work ethic; and beyond that, of the 18th-century social and economic revolution which first broke the continuity between familial life and the world of affairs and thereby gave rise to the conception of the family—familiar to us, but novel and startling in view of what had come before—as an alternative to "the world." These changes drastically altered the lives of women, but they also revolutionized the lives of men; and the great weakness of studies like Sinclair's is that they continue to treat what has happened to women as a special category of experience. The history of women, strictly speaking,

*By far the best study of these developments—indeed the only coherent study —is the superb monograph by J. A. and Olive Banks, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England.*

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cannot be written. What can be written, beginning with the 18th century, is the history of the family, of the emerging middle class, and of a social order in which the segregation of private and public realms of experience became the most characteristic feature, with consequences that are only beginning to be understood.

PRUDENT JURIST

POLITICS AND THE WARREN COURT. By ALEXANDER M. BICKEL. *Harper & Row. 210pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by MELVIN L. WULF

FOR all of the current attacks on the Supreme Court, no sensible critic would argue with the view that our Constitution and courts are basically sound. The crucial issue is whether their functions are to be circumscribed by notions of symmetry derived from the law's inevitably conservative self-image, or whether they are meant to be flexible, creative instruments to achieve social conditions satisfactory not only to the judges but to the judged.

This issue runs through *Politics and the Warren Court,* a collection of pieces originally written for the *New Republic* and other journals which Mr. Bickel has now published in substantially recast form. No one seriously interested in American politics should hesitate to read this book for fear that it is mere journalism or, worse, mere law. It is better than both. The first half, which analyzes various constitutional problems raised by the diversity of civil-rights activity, is the most literate discussion of the political tensions provoked by the civil-rights movement that has yet appeared. Its survey of the school desegregation cases following *Brown v. Board of Education* describes with deadly accuracy how the federal courts in the South accommodated the resistance to integration. Similarly, Mr. Bickel's discussions of the Kennedy civil-rights record, the strategy of civil disobedience, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act—which is tied together by his inquiry into the relative effectiveness of legal action by the courts and the executive branch—provide an enormously informative and provocative analysis of the relevant issues. The second half of *Politics and the Warren Court,* from which the book more directly draws its title, consists of an analysis of the Supreme Court's generally liberal rulings since 1953 in the areas of reapportionment, religious practices in public schools, and public funds in parochial schools.

ONE of the special virtues of *Politics and the Warren Court* is that it depicts Mr. Bickel's own tensions about the strategy of the civil-rights movement; and because he is such a precise writer, the book becomes a model of the liberal response to the Negro struggle. Mr. Bickel is clearly impatient to achieve the end of discrimination. He also recognizes the moral force which justifies the variety of extra-judicial tactics in which the movement has engaged. "Even violence," he says, "is not to be condemned for all time and in all circumstances merely because it is illegal and terribly costly." But though he persuasively explains the justification for violating bad laws and engaging in civil disobedience, Professor Bickel finally concludes that gradualism is the surest road to first-class citizenship for Negroes. This judgment marks his general approach to all civil-rights problems.

The major debate in the nation is not about whether racial justice is a national goal, for it surely is, but rather about the pace by which it is to be achieved, the degree of white dislocation which will be tolerated in the process, and the amount of political power to be applied by the federal government to secure equality. Addressing the problem of enforcing the 1964 Civil Rights Act, for example, Mr. Bickel asserts that if a large majority in a community or region is opposed to the law, "no normal police and prosecuting activity can be effective in such circumstances. Nothing short of the pervasive presence of armed men will do." He goes on:

> As a temporary measure, in case of a breakdown of elementary public order, this has proved necessary in the past, may again be

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necessary on future occasions, and it is well within the authority and capability of the federal government. But as a regular and more or less permanent device, it is something from which we recoil, deeming it destructive of the values of a free society, and in the end, quite possibly, counter-productive even in terms of its immediate aim. The true alternatives, therefore, are reducing the opposition by a process of inducement and persuasion, or abandoning the law.

This position is attractive until one realizes that it supports continued violation of the law where the Negro citizen is the victim in order to avoid destroying "the values of a free society." And even if one grants that there are two sides to these questions, Mr. Bickel's answer will keep the Negro where he is for another few generations, because though it represents the best qualities of civilized liberalism—intelligence, logic, and sympathy—it lacks passion, the one indispensable force if we are to shake our society from the racial status quo. Without an urgent commitment to the abolition of racial injustice, the Negro demand for change become just another interest to be placated when the policies are devised and the spoils distributed. The business of government goes on much as before except for a few largely symbolic gestures, such as legislation which remains substantially unenforced.

THIS is not to suggest that Mr. Bickel's position is hypocritical, but that it is weakened by his preference for preserving traditional democratic institutions rather than subjecting them to the risks of open political conflict. Bickel seems to assume, however, that the only available alternatives are gradualism or revolution, a choice which suggests a more skeptical view of the utility of the law and the immorality of discrimination than he otherwise professes. There is, in fact, a very broad spectrum of power which the courts and the executive branch can exercise without passing the boundaries of constitutionalism. The most obvious example is that of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which enables the federal government to withhold funds from state services which discriminate. The gentle enforcement of Title VI by the Johnson administration, though it may satisfy Professor Bickel, leaves the great bulk of Negroes where they were. If the statute were stringently enforced—even if on a selective basis—it would yield swift results without defeating any legitimate national interest. The same argument applies to the public-accommodations and equal-employment provisions of the 1964 Act and to the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Congress having acted, the competing national interests having been thoroughly debated, there is no reason but that of narrow expediency to postpone effective enforcement.

Along with his exaggerated concern for the customary patterns of government, Bickel is naive about some social realities, particularly in the South. He applauds the 1961 Freedom Rides and the subsequent order of the Interstate Commerce Commission forbidding discrimination in interstate travel, but when he describes its successful enforcement, one becomes aware that he has not recently visited very many places in the South, such as the Illinois Central Railroad terminal in Jackson or the bus depot in Indianola, Mississippi. Or again when he says that the poll tax "is more of a nuisance than a real impediment to voting," he is speaking not as a Negro sharecropper in the South but as a Yale law professor. These occasional misconceptions reveal the profound distance that separates New Haven from the Deep South.

MR. Bickel's analysis of politics and the Warren Court engage many of these same issues. It is no secret that the Supreme Court is more than just another court. Its power to construe the Constitution—and at the furthest reach of that power, to strike down statutes adopted by Congress—makes it an institution unique among governments. Within the past thirty-five years the Court has been increasingly regarded by political scientists as well as constitutional lawyers as a political body distinct from, but intimately related to, the more commonly understood political processes of the government. Though it has no

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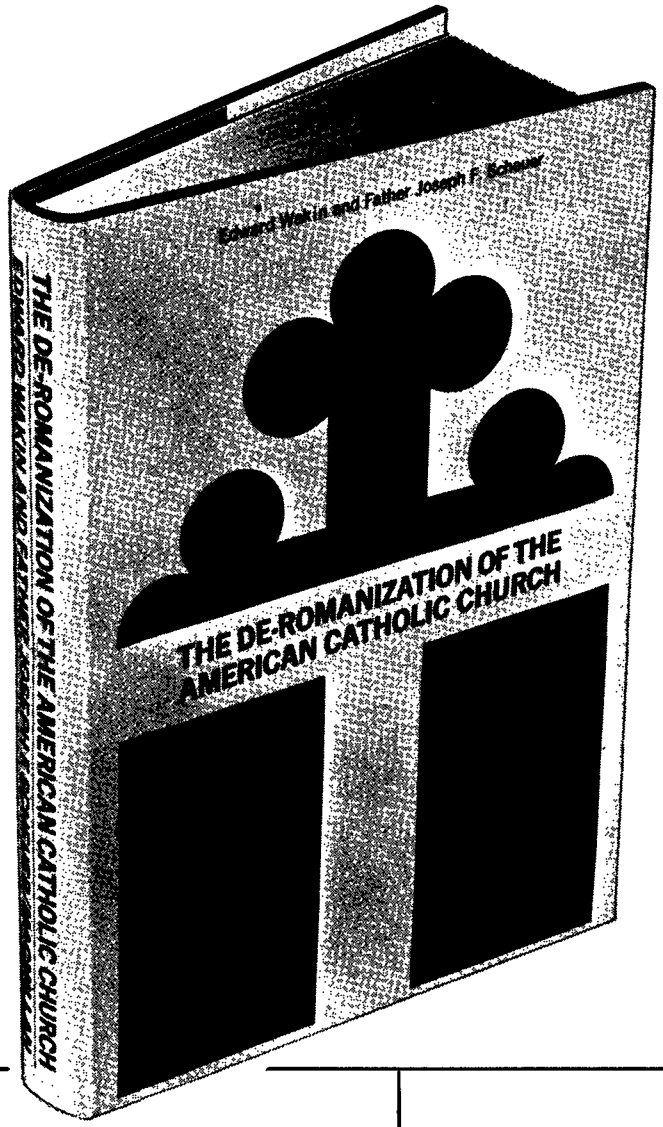
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power to initiate political action, the Court nonetheless has enormous power to effect social change by its decisions in crucial cases, such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, to say nothing of *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, and *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

The controversies over the use of this power pose the question of whether nine men appointed for life should be allowed, like Plato's guardians, to pass judgment on the representative wisdom of the people, and if necessary declare that wisdom unsound. It was that question to which Felix Frankfurter continually addressed himself and more often than not answered, to the disappointment of his former liberal admirers, in the negative.

There is in fact no *a priori* answer. One can attempt to fit the Court neatly into an abstract construct of democratic government and conclude that the Court ought to defer to Congress as the proper repository of the democratic will. On the other hand, one can conclude that history and experience justify the special role the Court has played in pronouncing judgment on social and political matters that either contradict the legislature's explicit declarations, or create affirmative policy where Congress has been silent.

THE general problem is further complicated by our federal system of government: This invites the states, which have their own vanities, to take offense at the Court's exercise of its additional power to ride herd over fifty separate flocks. Indeed, it has been the Warren Court's active involvement in the affairs of several states which has been responsible for exciting the largest measure of hostility against it.

Being a Frankfurterian, Mr. Bickel is committed to a more modest federal judicial role than has been the custom of the Warren Court and for that reason he is sharply critical of the Court's decisions requiring reapportionment of state legislatures. Further, he raises the practical question of whether "one-man one-vote" will succeed in reflecting the competing interests that ultimately resolve themselves into effective government. He fears

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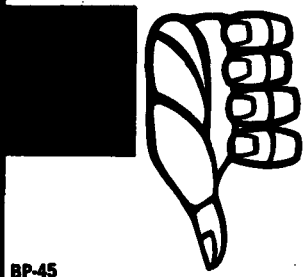

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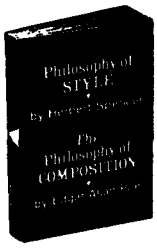

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the decisions will distract attention from more important causes of the deterioration of state and local governments, such as antiquated state legislative systems and fiscal decay. This point of view cannot lightly be dismissed, particularly after Bickel's argument, but when a Supreme Court decision is the immediate cause of the election of a SNCC staff member to the Georgia legislature, if only for a brief time, and several other Negroes as well, the mind boggles at the suggestion that judicial reapportionment is of little value.

In the area of church-state relations, Bickel takes the general separationist position in the debate over whether parochial schools should be supported by public funds, but he is not obsessive about it as are so many others. In fact, he more or less brushes the traditional constitutional argument aside and bases his position mainly on the "nationalizing" role played by the public schools.

> . . . Public school secularism is not just another among our many sects. It has cohesive national content . . . and its function is unique. It is what we render unto Caesar and what we get from Caesar. To offer equal support throughout to public and private schools would be effectively to abandon the mission of the state, for it would be to surrender the sole means by which the state is permitted to draw people to its schools and away from centrifugal ones.

One hopes that Professor Bickel will take the time to develop this thesis at greater length and to protect it against the charge that it advocates a slavish indoctrination to the state. It may well be a promising alternative for those who look with some apprehension upon the more modish First Amendment argument.

As to the School Prayer Cases, Mr. Bickel believes the decision which forbade the recitation of a vacuous prayer in the New York public schools was unfortunate. Though Bickel (and I, too, I might add) aspires to the total secularization of public education, he asks whether it was timely "to ventilate the issue of religion in the sort of absolute terms that are certain to alienate many of those whose patronage and support of the public schools is especially needed." Civil libertarians should re-assess their priorities and candidly decide whether they are willing to jeopardize the prestige of the Supreme Court and consequently the authority of its pronouncements on issues of grave public concern for the sake of vapid prayers which children will easily survive.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

JOHN WAIN *is the well-known English novelist, poet, and critic.*

SIDNEY HOOK, *a frequent contributor to* COMMENTARY, *is chairman of the department of philosophy at New York University.*

CHRISTOPHER LASCH *reviewed* PAUL GOODMAN'S People or Personnel *in our November 1965 issue.*

MELVIN L. WULF, *a new contributor, is the legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.*

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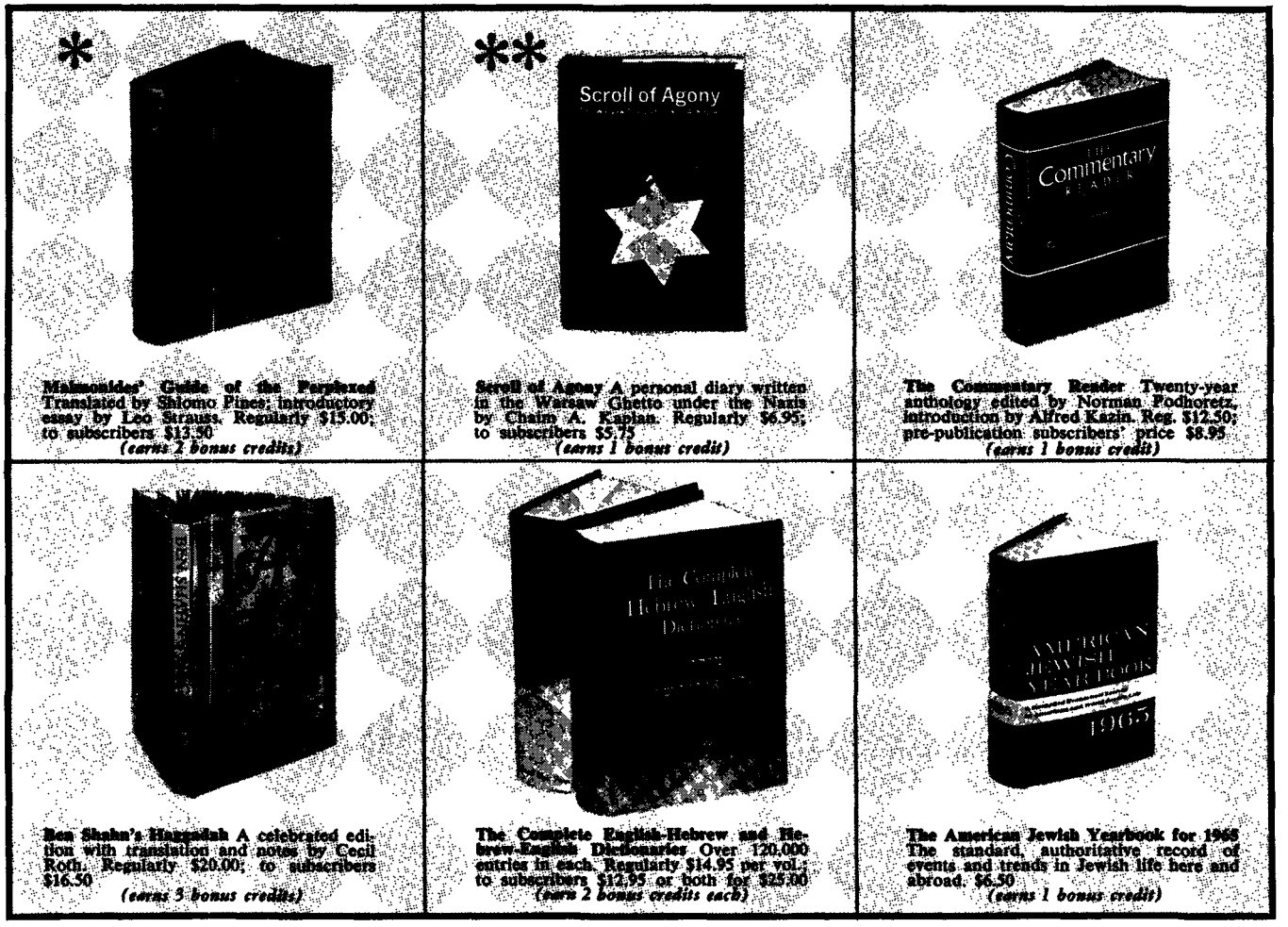

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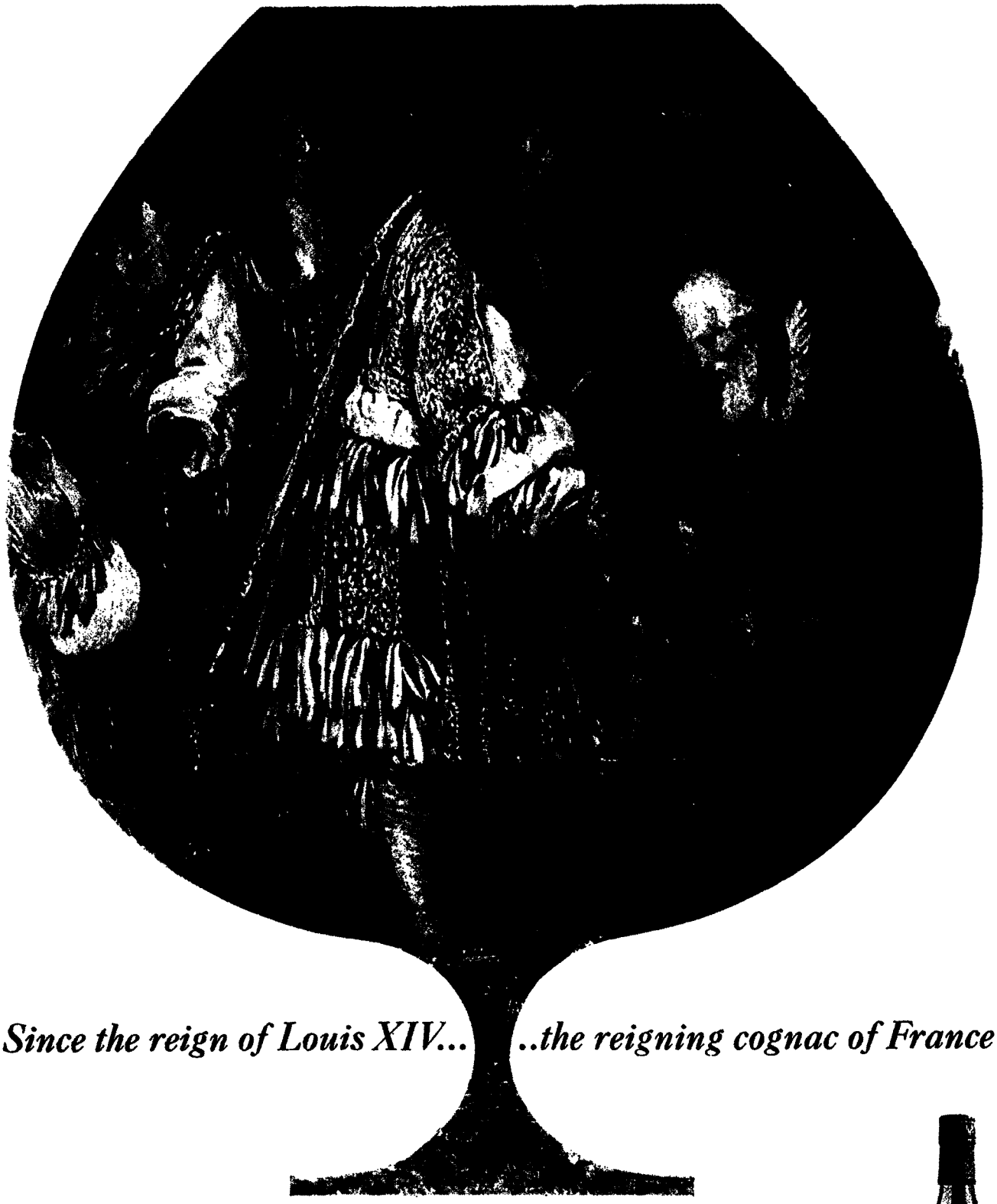

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